OCTOBER 1980 NUMBER 32 $2.00

# THE SPACE GAMER

THE MAGAZINE OF ADVENTURE GAMING

## SPECIAL *TRAVELLER* ISSUE

ITHILIEN CLASS SCOUTSHIPS
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# THE SPACE GAMER

*NUMBER 32 – OCTOBER, 1980*

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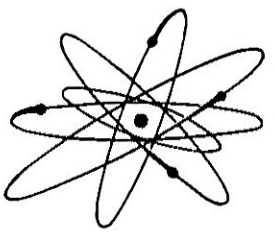
# In This Issue

*Traveller* is without question the leading s-f role-playing game on the market. It seemed like a more than worthwhile topic for a special issue. So . . . we've got a number of *Traveller*-related game and supplement reviews, a variant article, and the winner of the Ship Design Contest. (There wasn't room to print the runner-up – but let it be noted here that Ron Shigeta's design ran a close second.) The winner was Mark Chittenden; his design appears on page 11.

This month's cover is by Chris White, who has done quite a bit of illustration for Avalon Hill – notably the box art for *Dune* and *Magic Realm.*

For the fantasy fan, we've got "Ten Characters I Wouldn't Let In My Universe." And for gamers in general, a report from Yaquinto Games.

*–Steve Jackson*



**THE SPACE GAMER**

Publisher: Steve Jackson
Editor: Forrest Johnson
Art Director: Denis Loubet
Contributing Editors:
William A. Barton
Ronald Pehr
Nick Schuessler
Bruce F. Webster
Business Manager: Elton Fewell
Circulation Manager: Aaron Allston
Utility Infielder: Elisabeth Barrington

THE SPACE GAMER (ISSN 0194-9977, USPS 434-250) is published monthly by The Space Gamer, 7207 Onion Crossing Dr., Austin, TX 78744. Second class postage paid at Austin, TX. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Space Gamer, P. O. Box 18805, Austin, TX 78760.

All material is copyright 1980 by *The Space Gamer.* All rights reserved.

Printed in U.S.A. by Futura Press, Austin.

Subscription rates, effective 5/15/80:

| | US | Canada | Other foreign |
|---|---|---|---|
| One year | $21 | $24 | $41 |
| Two years | $39 | $45 | $79 |
| Lifetime | $250 | $260 | N/A |

All prices are in U.S. dollars; payment must be in U.S. dollars.

# Where We're Going

### More Pages!

Starting next month, TSG will be 8 pages longer. We'll keep up the new larger size as long as advertising allows. Basically, we don't ever want TSG to be more than 25% advertising. Even that is really too much. So . . . when there are too many ads for 32 pages, we go up to 40. Fortunately, having that many ads lets us *afford* 40 pages. That means our advertisers are the ones bringing you those extra pages – so show your appreciation by spending some money with them.

### Steve Jackson Games ??? !!!

Now the big news. Effective right now, I'm back in the games business. And very pleased about it, too. It's what I've wanted to do for a LONG time. . . publish my own game designs. I set a high standard for my own work; I hope *you* approve of it.

*(There is a basic conflict of interest between) "quality-oriented designers and profit-oriented publishers. Both are vital to the hobby, but incompatible under the same roof. Only an independent designer can guarantee the eventual quality of his design."*

*–Randy Reed, in resigning his post as VP of Research and Design at Avalon Hill*

That sums it up, right there. If you want to make sure something is done right, do it yourself. I want to design playable, fun games that will sell cheaply and have really nice components. If I have to publish them myself – well, that's the way it goes. I expect to have a lot of fun with this over the next few years. I'll do my best to make money at it, too . . . that's the only way you can keep a company going! But, again, that's up to *you*.

(A digression. This doesn't mean that I won't sell designs to other companies. I probably will. It also doesn't mean that I will publish only my own designs. I'm already publishing one "outside" design. I'll probably do others. And I'll work with the designers as I'd want a publisher to work with me . . . but the final responsibility for the quality of the game will be mine, because it'll have my name on it right after that designer's.)

### The First Batch

There are four initial offerings. The planned release date for all four is October 15. As I write this, it's September 3; by the time you get to read it, it'll be late September or early October. So if you want any of these, go ahead and order now. By the time your order gets here, we ought to be ready to fill it.

You can read all about the new games in the ad on the inside back cover – but I've got to say a little bit here, too. There are three games. They're alike in that each is printed in color on glossy stock, each has 112 3-color counters, and each comes in a ziplock bag. Other than that, they're very different. One is s-f, one is modern, and one is historical.

KUNG FU 2100 you've already seen; it was in TSG 30. We've dressed it up and fixed a few glitches, but it's the same game: martial arts in the far future.

ONE-PAGE BULGE is another Battle of the Bulge game. The gimmick: Redmond Simonsen wrote not long ago that he wondered if a wargame could be written with one page of rules. Yes, it can. Here it is. Good game, too.

RAID ON IRAN: What would have happened if the helicopters had gone into Tehran on schedule? A game about something that could have happened, and *still* could happen.

The fourth product isn't a game; it's a miniatures set. *Cardboard* miniatures. These are full-color, 25-mm, front-and-back paintings by Denis Loubet. The b&w picture in the ad hardly does them justice; you have to see them. These may make a lot of fantasy gamers throw away their old playing pieces. They're beautiful.

Anyway, Steve Jackson Games is now in business. Wish me luck.

### Subscriber Benefits

For various reasons, the new game company is an entity separate from TSG. Nevertheless, there'll be close cooperation. And there *will* be benefits for TSG subscribers purchasing the new games.

Right now, it's free postage on game orders. Non-subscribers ordering games can pay 25 cents per game for 3rd-class

## Next Issue

***Next issue's theme will be play-by-mail games . . . computer-moderated and otherwise. We'll lead off with a survey of the play-by-mail game companies. Also coming up:***

***A WarpWar variant - suitable for either play-by-mail or face-to-face multi-player gaming.***

***Reviews of Warp Force One, Empyrean Challenge, and Universe II.***

***A Company Report on Schubel and Son, moderators of "Tribes of Crane," "StarMaster," and other pbm games.***

***Non-pbm features will include:***

***An Ogre/GEV short story and game scenario.***

***The winner of the Trap Contest, and several of the more fiendish runners-up . . . complete with diagrams!***

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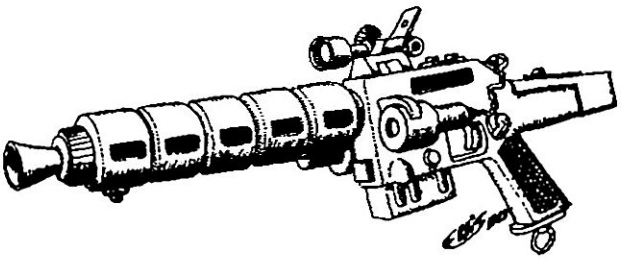

mail, or 50 cents per game for first class. (First-class costs, but it sure shortens the wait!) However . . . TSG subscribers pay no postage fee when they order. You get a $3 game for $3, flat. And, *for a while* at least, subscribers will get their games first class. Back issues, posters, etc., will still go out by second or third class. Eventually (especially if postal rates go up) we may drop back to third-class postage to subscribers, with an option to pay a little extra and get first-class postage. I can't make any long-term promises; postal rates are unreliable.

### Demon Poster

We've had a supply of posters printed up, showing the "demon-summoning" picture from TSG 28 . . . but BIG. These are 17" x 22" – and they look GOOD. You can order these for $1.50 each, plus 25 cents postage (50 cents for first class, or free postage for subscribers). Or . . . you can get one free.

If you take a look at the cards bound in this issue, you'll see that one of them makes a free offer. We're trying to build up our mailing list of retail game stores. Send us the address(es) of your local game retailer(s). Anyone who provides us with a new store name will get a poster, free. Check the card for details.

### Credit Purchases

You've probably noticed that our order forms now allow credit-card purchases on either MasterCard or Visa. It's an experiment. We know not everyone has a credit card; still, some people prefer to use them. It's a lot faster to write down your credit card number than it is to dig out the checkbook. One request: please don't use your card for purchases of less than $10. There's just too much paperwork.

*–Steve Jackson*

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# GAME MASTER

*GAME MASTER exists to answer questions on your favorite games. If you have a rules question or play problem, send it in. Questions to be answered will be chosen on the basis of general interest. They will first be referred to the game publisher or designer. If no response is received, GAME MASTER will offer its own interpretation of the rule. Sorry – no individual replies are possible.*

*GAME MASTER also invites publishers to send errata or clarifications for their new games. They will be printed as space allows.*

I just played *Kung Fu 2100* and found it to be quite enjoyable . . . however, Arnie Goldman just doesn't cut it as a name for a martial artist. Back to the game itself . . . one part I found hard to swallow is the relative lack of power of guns. I think 1-5 on the "gun vs. inactive" and 1-2 on the "gun vs. Monkey Soul" table would be more accurate. Perhaps this could be another optional rule to adjust play balance. . . .

There are a few questions I have on the rules:

(1) Rule 6.1a states that Jellies may only be set up in a room or hall with a "J" in it. Once released, can they go anywhere or are they still limited to a room with a "J"? What about servants and technicians? Also, should the loos and the lab access corridor have any letters in them?

(2) Can a Terminator exit a loo occupied by a CloneMaster figure?

On the whole, I liked this game and would enjoy seeing supplementary material on it in future issues. I also would like to see more complete games. Just make sure they are really games and not merely half thought-out ideas like *Tartars & Martyrs.*

–Paul Laferriere

*Thanks for the comments. As you can see in* Where We're Going, *KF2100 is now available as a separate game – mostly due to praise from the people who played it. And your questions (and those of several others) led to clarifications in the rules.*

*Arnie is partially for comic relief – but after all, not* all *martial artists are Oriental, or even want to be!*

*As to guns: this is a game about people who fight so well that they make guns look almost useless. But you're right: making the guns more powerful would be an easy way to adjust play balance in the CloneMaster's favor, if necessary.*

*To answer your rules questions: (1) Any figure can move to any square once released, regardless of the letters in the corner. They affect set-up ONLY. The loos and lab access corridor have no letters because no figures may be set up there – all those spaces are adjacent to doors, and a figure cannot start next to a door.*

*(2) Yes, a Terminator can exit a loo occupied by an enemy figure. However, if the enemy is a Jelly, the Terminator must have enough extra movement to pass by him.*

*–Steve Jackson*

A couple of questions about *Starfleet Battles* (Task Force Games):

(1) If a ship starts with one warp engine, is it affected by left and right warp engine hits?

(2) The warp engines of the Tholian Patrol Cruiser are not marked as left, right, and center. What are their classifications for hit determination purposes?

–Earl S. Cooley III

*It looks as though both questions boil down to the same one: How should warp engines be designated when no left/right/center designations appear on the ship diagram? Several of the* Starfleet Battles *diagrams show ships with one or more warp engines but no l/r/c designations. The easiest way out (and the one most in keeping with the game system) would be to write in designations and stick to them. If a ship has only one engine, that engine can be assumed to be "center." If it has two, one is left, one is right. If it has three, they are left, center, and right. I don't think that anything else makes much sense. If, for instance, a ship with only one warp engine is affected by ANY "warp engine" hit, then its single small engine is somehow more exposed than either of the big engines of a cruiser.*

*–Steve Jackson*


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***Three games and one set of miniatures – each retailing for $3 – are now available from Steve Jackson Games. For details about these products, see the advertisement on the inside back cover of this magazine.***

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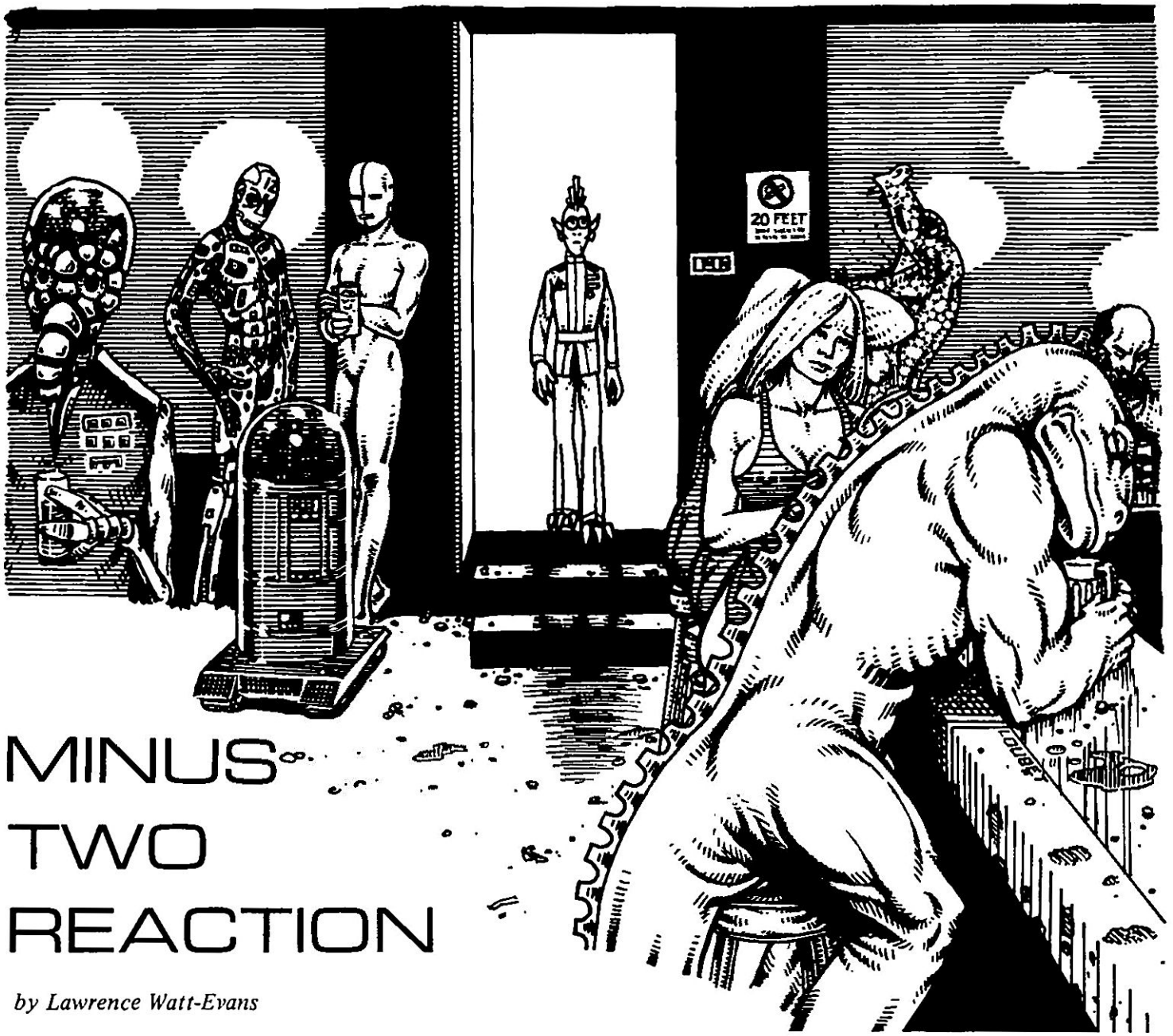



# MINUS TWO REACTION

*by Lawrence Watt-Evans*

Hanging half a meter from the top of the glossy black facade, glittering stardust spelled THE ORIGINAL OLD-TIME JOE'S BAR & GRILL; below, five fuzzy edged spots of depolarized transparency chased one another across the surface, giving passersby tantalizing glimpses of the dim, red-lit interior. Xahh paused and peered longingly. The ruddy warm glow was painfully reminiscent of his far-off home.

*Varkles,* he thought, *why not*? He wasn't due back aboard ship for five hours, and the door stood invitingly ajar just a meter away. He'd never been in a joint like this before, and had heard discouraging tales of the hazards, but that friendly glow made him dismiss such stories as xenophobic fabrications. The door swung open as he approached.

The place was bigger inside than he had expected; one wall was covered with game-machines, half the opposite wall with dispensers, and the remainder by a huge, old-fashioned wood bar with ornate brass and crystal trim. The rear wall was totally invisible, lost in the smoke and darkness. Close at hand there reared up a large brass serpent, polished to a ruddy gold in the crimson gloom. Where its snout should have ended in a pair of slit nostrils, there were instead three upward-curving horns, each capped by a solid brass ball, and its mouth gaped open impossibly. A sniff in its direction told Xahh's sensitive nose that it was dispensing pure oxygen, for those who chose to start the evening's intoxication with an oxygen jag.

Psychbeat music filled the room, blending subtly with the hum of conversation from the two dozen occupied tables. Xahh relaxed as its soothing effects reached him, and crossed to the bar. Clambering awkwardly onto an empty stool, he glanced around at the other patrons and waited for the bartender to notice him.

To one side were three unoccupied seats and the end of the bar; to the other side a single stool separated him from an immense green lizard-creature, looking almost black in the red light, which sat contemplating a half-empty glass of some viscous purple fluid. Beyond it – or probably him, but Xahh was uncertain – were arrayed three identical young pure-human women, presumably free clones, sniffing cocaine. They struck Xahh as being misshapen, with far more chest than seemed reasonable. There was a gap after them; at the far end of the bar there sat a withered old man with chocolate-brown skin, wearing a tattered and

archaic pressure suit but no helmet. The bartender was talking to him, though Xahh couldn't hear a thing at that distance.

Behind him sat a representative sampling of the port's groundling population: naked loading androids, human administrators in uniform, gleaming metal mobile A.I., inhumanly graceful cyborgs, and all the other specialized or purebred people that one found in Terra's greatest starport.

"What'll it be?"

The bartender's voice startled him, distracted as he was by his study of the bar's patrons. He turned back around and said, "Ah, whisky and water, please." It was the only local drink he was familiar with; he had been too timid to do much adventuring in his brief stay on Terra, but one of the old hands among his crewmates had introduced him to this concoction that was both cool and fiery at once. It didn't have that same intoxicating effect on him that it did on humans, but a few of them would give him a slight feeling of euphoria.

He had only seen the bartender reach below the counter, without mixing anything, but here his drink was. Obviously an automatic drink dispenser was at work. Some "old-time authenticity"! He barely restrained a snort as he handed the bartender his credit card. Well, at least they had a human bartender; most bars had gone completely modern.

Assuming, that is, that the bartender *was* human. Xahh peered at him suspiciously, but couldn't decide. There were no visible signs that the bartender was anything but pure, but they made convincing cybers and androids of even his own small people these days; a thing the size of that bartender, a portly two meters tall, could hold any intelligence around with room to spare.

The man, if he was a man, returned the card, and Xahh restrained another snort as he saw his new balance registered on the display. At these prices they could sure afford a human! Tucking the card away, he sipped his drink, and was pleasantly surprised; it was *good,* almost worth what it cost. Whatever else they might stint, the bar's owners didn't scrimp on their booze. No wonder it was a popular local hangout.

He sipped again, and glanced up at the mirror behind the bar. His eyes met the reflected gaze of the lizard-thing, who seemed to be blearily studying Xahh's image. Xahh turned away, looking instead at a cobwebbed bottle below the mirror, as the stories of beatings and robberies at these dives came back to him.

"Hey, Shorty."

The unsteady voice came from the lizard-creature, who was now studying Xahh himself rather than his reflection.

"Yeah?" He hoped his voice didn't give away his nervousness.

"You new 'round here?"

"Passing through."

"Oh." The green creature turned back to his purple goo long enough to suck up some through a hollow tongue, then went on, "Wa's yer name?"

"Xahh."

"Kha?"

"Close enough; Xahh."

"Khah, right. Please t'meet yer. I'm called Argonath; Argo for short."

Xahh nodded politely.

"Gonna be 'round long?"

"No, my ship leaves tonight."

"Ship? Oh. Never ridden one, myself."

That caught Xahh by surprise; his crest twitched as he took another sip of his drink. He looked up at the creature. "You're from around here?"

"Yeah. From the plant down the road." Holding its drink in one three-clawed hand, it motioned vaguely with the other, then hiccupped; Xahh saw sparks scattering from the thing's mouth. He would have liked to dismiss it as an illusion, but he couldn't imagine why he might be hallucinating. Had he gotten the wrong drink? Maybe whisky had effects he hadn't noticed before.

He said, "Oh," and took another gulp of whisky and water.

"Yeah, I'm a, I'm . . ." The creature tittered drunkenly, then abruptly stopped and whined, "I'm a factory reject, tha's what I am. S'posed to be a dragon, for some entertainmen' or somethin', but I didn' come out like they wanted."

"Too bad." Xahh was honestly touched by the creature's pitiful expression, but he was also increasingly nervous of his own safety.

"Where you from?"

Xahh shrugged. "Nowhere special."

"Ah, c'mon; you sure aren't a purebred, you must be from somewhere."

"I'm second pilot on a starship."

"Oh, so *tha's* why yer so small! Save weight!"

Xahh nodded.

"Where y' from originally?" Xahh could smell the creature's acrid breath; it was leaning toward him, and he knew he couldn't avoid answering much longer. He considered lying, but he knew he wouldn't. It would be worse to be caught in a lie than to admit the truth, and he didn't know enough terrestrial geography to lie convincingly.

"Arcturus III."

"Arc . . .?" The dragon-thing sat up straight. "You're an *alien*?"

"Yeah." He might brazen it out yet, he thought.

"An *ALIEN*?! In *Joe's Bar*?"

He wasn't going to get away with it, he knew. With a gulp, he finished his drink, as conversation died and the occupants of the bar all began to stare in his direction. One of the big-chested clones pulled a needlegun from somewhere, and leaned past the dragon toward him, weapon raised and pointing at the mirrored ceiling. The dragon itself was still too astonished to do much but gape. She said nothing, merely glared, letting the weapon speak for itself.

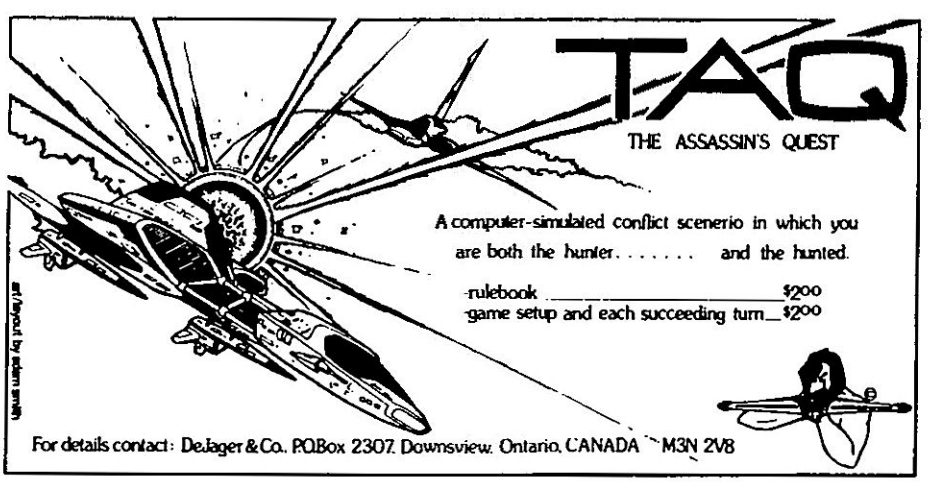
"Hey, buddy, this is a nice joint." It was a naked, sexless android that spoke.

"Yeah, we don't need you here," said a glittering, golden cyborg.

"This is a Terran bar, freak." The monotone voice came from the wheeled box of a cryogenic artificial.

"An alien!" The dragon still gaped.

Xahh knew when he wasn't wanted; he slipped from his stool and walked, with all the dignified calm he could manage, out the door. Behind him he heard a clone saying, "Damn foreigners! C'mon, Argo, I'll buy you a drink."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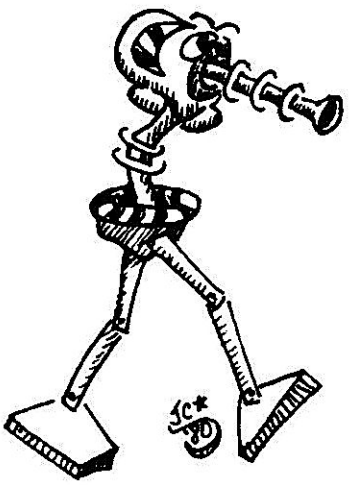

# Alternate Characters for *TRAVELLER*

## by Forrest Johnson

Where are the aliens?

Everyone who plays *Traveller* must wonder about that. Where are the Vulcans and Wookies and other creatures that enrich science fiction? Everyone is so depressingly human. Where there is a role for an alien, as in *Azhanti High Lightning*, the game treats him much like a funny-looking human.

GDW, in its wisdom, will doubtless give us some aliens in due course. For those who do not care to wait, I would like to offer some guidelines for creating alternate characters.

### Character Types

Alternate characters may belong to one of a number of categories:

*Aliens.* Non-humaniti, like the Vargr, and Humaniti subspecies, like the Zhodani, may be included under this heading. Aliens have little in common but their diversity.

*Cyborgs.* On some high-population worlds, it is common for parents to pay for modifications to their children, in order to improve their chances of finding employment in adulthood. Cyborgs differ from other characters in that they have prosthetics which may give them higher effective strength or intelligence, or special abilities, but usually handicap them in some way. Basically, a cyborg can have any of the features of a robot except programming. Cyborgs may be high or low in social standing, depending on the profession for which their modifications were intended.

*Androids.* Artificial people. They require some special comments. They are created on high-technology, low population worlds to supplement the military or labor force. Androids are organic constructs, not robots. They cannot be programmed. In common practice, an android owes its creator twelve years of service. Then it is free. At best an imperfect substitute for a human, an android ages ("wears out") somewhat faster. This factor is offset by intensive development and training; an android's effective career is just as long as a human's.

Start an android character at "age 18." (Its true age is much lower.) Give it the same enlistment roll as everyone else. (This represents the probability it will be assigned to the work for which it was created.) An android will serve three sequential terms. (It does not need to make a re-enlistment roll.) An android may continue to serve in its profession beyond age 30 if it makes the required re-enlistment roll. Check for age as humans. Androids are usually of low social status.

*Robots.* Really machines, rather than characters. They have been discussed in *The Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society*. I have nothing to add.

### Designing Characters

The average dice roll for a *Traveller* character is 7. Hence, the average total of the six characteristics is 42. The GM may allow any character type he wishes, but to be fair, he should make sure that the average probable value of its total characteristics equals 42.

Since 2d6 is worth an average of 7 points, it follows that 2d6+1 is worth 8; 1d6, 3½; 1d6+1, 4½, and so on. One could go farther, and allow 1d3 to be worth 2 points, or 1d5 to be worth 3. For purposes of this article, we will stick to six-sided dice as a basis for character generation.

Since characteristics are supposed to range between 1 and 15, die rolls are limited. A roll of 1d6-1 might result in zero. 2d6+4 might result in a characteristic of 16. Therefore, we are limited to a range of die rolls between 1d6 and 2d6+3.

### Example

A player wishes to create a character who is a Vulcan. The GM decides that Vulcans are stronger, smarter, and more dextrous than humans. On the other hand they are likely to have difficulty if they try to establish themselves in human society. A Vulcan might be rolled up like this:

Strength 2d6+1 (8 pts.)
Dexterity 2d6+1 (8 pts.)
Endurance 2d6 (7 pts.)
Intelligence 2d6+1 (8 pts.)
Education 2d6 (7 pts.)
Social Standing 1d6 (3½ pts.)
(Total: 41½ pts.)

Looking at his creation, the GM thinks 41½ points is a very untidy figure. Besides, he has not allowed points for special Vulcan abilities – the Mind Lock and the Nerve Pinch.

Consulting the basic books, he decides the Mind Lock is the same thing as a psionic probe (III: 36), not really a special Vulcan ability. The Nerve Pinch is probably a close range combat ability, useful against Humaniti and a few similar species. The GM decides it is worth one point. But that raises the total average value of a Vulcan to 42½ points, half a point too high. He decides a Vulcan cannot use a Nerve Pinch unless he has a skill at brawling. That reduces the value to ½. He now has a 42-point average and is ready to roll.

(Note that the 42-point total is only the expected *average* of the die rolls you make to create the character. Once the die rolls are made, your alien may have a high or low total, just like any human character . . . but the average alien should have about 42 points.)

### Special Features

As you may have gathered from the example, alternate characters may have special features, which should be evaluated and subtracted from the 42-point

total. GMs should be most cautious about which abilities to grant, and at what price. Some examples:

*1-point features* – gills, nocturnal vision, claws, epidermis equivalent to jack, or aging delayed 2 years.

*2-point features* – extra limb, immunity to tainted air, stinger, epidermis equivalent to mesh, or aging delayed 4 years.

*3-point features* – personal antigravity vacc suit, thrasher, epidermis equivalent to cloth, or aging delayed 6 years.

Obviously this can get pretty expensive. To put things in perspective, remember that an ordinary man, with his full 42 points and a few thousand credits worth of equipment, can outperform a super-android with a bushel of built-in features.

### Special Handicaps

In order to increase its 42 points, the GM may gift an alternate character with some special handicaps. Special features subtract from the available points; special handicaps add. Some samples:

*1-point handicaps* – colorblind, flabby (+1 to be hit), spindly (takes +1 damage per hit), cannot use human drugs, or ages 2 years earlier than normal.

*2-point handicaps* – smelly (-1 to all reaction rolls), neurotic (becomes hysterical in the presence of large invertebrates), requires special food or frequent recharging, or ages 4 years earlier than normal.

*3-point handicaps* – unable to speak a human language, no immunity to microbes (away from home planet), collapses under gravity of worlds size 7 and up, or ages 6 years earlier then normal.

### Another Example

*Military Service Android*
Strength 2d6+2 (9 pts.)
Dexterity 2d6+2 (9 pts.)
Endurance 2d6+2 (9 pts.)
Intelligence 2d6-1 (6 pts.)
Education 1d6 (3½ pts.)
Social Standing 1d6 (3½ pts.)
(Total: 40 pts.)
Special Features: two extra arms (4 pts.)
Special Handicaps: begins aging at 30 (2 pts.)
Comments: cheap, expendable, deadly in combat.

### A Final Example

*The Arcturan*
Strength 1d6+1 (4½ pts.)
Dexterity 2d6+3 (10 pts.)
Endurance 1d6+1 (4½ pts.)
Intelligence 2d6+1 (8 pts.)
Education 2d6 (7 pts.)
Social Standing 2d6 (7 pts.)
(Total: 41 pts.)
Special Features: sensitive nose (1 pt.)
Special Handicaps: none, except possibly a tendency to go slumming (0 pts.)
Comments: a race well adapted to space travel. (Note that Xahh, in the story, did not receive his bad reaction through any fault or unpleasant characteristic of his own. The people in Joe's Bar just didn't like aliens.)

### Playing Alternate Characters

This takes discretion. One or two alternate characters in a party add interest. Twice as many are not twice as good.

Until GDW sets some standards, each GM must decide for himself what kind of characters he will allow in his universe. If the GM won't let you play your battle-armored cyborg with the built-in auto cannon, don't blame me!


# TSG BACK ISSUES

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No. 20. Olympica tactics; Psionics in Traveller; TARTARS & MARTYRS; Reality in Melee; designer's optional rules for Ice War; designer's article on Starships & Spacemen; "Rip-Off Blues" (wargaming frauds).
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No. 31. "Sam Beowulf"; 1980 Game Software survey; Game Design Part 5; Random Maze Generation; 9 pages of reviews.
No. 32. Traveller issue . . . Alternate Character Types, reviews of play aids, scenarios, and variants; also Game Design Part 6; Deus Ex Machina; "Minus Two Reaction"; software survey update; Yaquinto Games report; 8 pages of reviews.

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# EXPANDING *TRAVELLER*

*Traveller*, GDW's science fiction role-playing game, is a system that cries out for expansion. Its limits are as indefinite as the reaches of outer space that serve as its background. In the past several months, a number of gaming companies and groups (not to mention GDW itself) have heeded this cry and have issued what is rapidly becoming a flood of supplements, adventures, and play aids (shades of D&D!). Among the best of these *Traveller* expansion materials are those of Judges Guild, all approved by GDW and entitled to the term "official" *Traveller* variants. In the following paragraphs, we will briefly review a number of *Traveller* offerings.

ACROSS THE BRIGHT FACE/MISSION ON MITHRIL, *Traveller* Double Adventure 2 (For Referees Only), (GDW); $4.98. Designed by Marc Miller. 9" x 6" 44-page booklet. One referee and two to eight players; playing time indefinite. Published 1980.

Cross-country adventure is the theme of *Traveller* Double Adventure 2. Whereas Double Adventure 1 took players inside two large alien structures, ACROSS THE BRIGHT FACE/MISSION ON MITHRIL takes place mostly in the open, pitting adventurers against the elements as they cross the Bright Face of Dinom or the frozen surface of Mithril in the Sword Worlds. Although similar on the surface, each adventure is varied enough so that there will be no feelings of *deja vu* when playing the second of the two scenarios. BRIGHT FACE features the players as bodyguards whose patron has been murdered in a miners' revolution and who must avoid both pursuing miners and treacherous terrain to reach safety at the spaceport. MITHRIL concerns a mapping survey of three anomalous spots on the planet that the characters must conduct in exchange for vital repairs on their ship. Both scenarios require only the basic *Traveller* books and each provides a set of pre-generated characters and new, special equipment – including the heretofore absent laser pistol. Introductory sections describe each planet (with full-page maps) and the background situation for the players. Specific terrain and event tables are provided for the referee. MITHRIL also features special animal encounter tables for peculiar planetary fauna and weather tables to reflect changing meteorological conditions. Stats for the use, operation, and administration of the Horronon tracked ATV used in both scenarios are located at the end of BRIGHT FACE. Either scenario will guarantee plenty of excitement for player and referee alike.

Several features of BRIGHT FACE/MITHRIL are of note, particularly the upgrading of vacc suits to the equivalent of cloth armor rather than the almost worthless jack armor, which usually spelt certain doom for any vacc-suited character fired on. Also, it is interesting to note that the pre-generated characters for MITHRIL are the same as those used in *Shadows* and, with one exception, *Research Station Gamma*, making it quite simple to string the three into a continuous adventure-to-adventure campaign.

I find little of which to complain in this double adventure. There is some uncertainty involved with MITHRIL's weather table and the appearance of the ephemeral glades, and provisions for the monorail mentioned in BRIGHT FACE seem to be missing, but generally both adventures are quite well done.

All in all, ACROSS THE BRIGHT FACE/MISSION ON MITHRIL will prove to be a helpful addition to the collection of any *Traveller* referee – *and* player.

*– William A. Barton*

DRA'K'NE STATION (Judges Guild); $4.95. Designed by Bill Paley. Adventure approved for use with *Traveller*. One 60-page 8½" x 11" booklet. For two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1979.

Picture an alien research station constructed in the center of a huge asteroid, two miles long by half a mile thick, armed with anti-matter guns, defended by laser-equipped security robots, shock traps, and – possibly – survivors of a long-dead reptilian race and fully equipped with technological devices of an unknown nature. Now picture yourself entering this station, either out of necessity or just curiosity.

There are several nice points about this adventure, perhaps one of the most interesting *Traveller* scenarios yet released by anyone. First is the completeness of detail. All twelve levels of DRA'K'NE STATION are completely mapped out in typical Judges Guild fashion, leaving no room for ambiguity – yet leaving enough features to chance or the referee's discretion (whether or not certain systems are still working, if there are any living Dra'k'ne aboard, etc.) to keep the adventure fresh and interesting every step of the way. I particularly like the "Table for Describing Indescribable Knick-Knacks" that may be found in individual Dra'k'ne staterooms. The Dra'k'ne themselves are an intriguing race; more so, I'm afraid, than the few aliens GDW has allowed so far to trickle into *Traveller*. The possibility left open for some of the players to take the part of defending Dra'k'ne against the adventurers should not be overlooked. The anti-matter weapon found on the station is a worthy – and quite lethal – addition to *Traveller*'s arsenal of ship-to-ship weaponry, though referees should be cautious about letting it fall into the hands of over-zealous players (the sort that want to overthrow the Imperium) – it could unbalance your campaign drastically (Poof! Your battle cruiser just disappeared!).

The only minor flaw I see in the whole scenario is the length of time it will take the adventurers to salvage the station and to learn anything really useful from its research – should they manage to survive that long. But again, this is a minor complaint and shouldn't spoil the overall enjoyment of the game.

Bringing things to a close, I recommend DRA'K'NE STATION as well worth the investment for any *Traveller* afficionado who wants a challenging adventure and who doesn't mind the possibility of losing a character or two in the process. I look forward to Judges Guild's next offering.

*– William A. Barton*

FICTIONEERS (Stan Johansen Miniatures). $3.00. 25mm science fiction figures and accessories for wargames. Released 1979-80.

This line of figures is suitable for use with *Traveller* and other s-f games. The sample pack I have here is an especially nice one – a set of 6 computers and instrument banks, very "Star Trek"-looking. Could be useful for the dioramist, or just for the gamer who likes a control room to look real. The $3 price isn't unreasonable for this amount of lead. Detail is fairly good; quality control high (no flash visible anywhere).

My only criticism is that some of the pieces must be handled very carefully once assembled or you'll be re-gluing them every game.

Recommended for s-f miniatures play.

*–Steve Jackson*

MINIATURES FOR TRAVELLER (Martian Metals); $2.95/set. Twelve 15mm figures per set (except for the aliens set, which contains ten figures). Released 1980.

Nine sets are currently available – adventurers (2 sets), soldiers (3 sets), thugs, robots, Vargr, and aliens. Figures range from Buck Rogers-style to creatures from the movie *Alien*. Almost all are armed. There is some duplication within each set, except for the adventurers, who are all different.

These figures go well with the game. A few sets are all you need to play *Snapshot* or *Azhanti High Lightning*. The miniatures fit without too much crowding on a half-inch grid. The detail is nice and the variety is spectacular.

Unfortunately, buyers will find a speckling of the usual problems – flimsy weapons, inadequate bases, mold marks, and so on. Not too bad. Most of the figures are OK; the rest can be redeemed. More seriously, a lot of the figures are spread-eagled, with the arms away from the body. Easy to cast, but they look dumb, and cannot always be bent into shape without cracking the lead.

The selection is good, but not perfect. Some of the robots might be used with *Research Station Gamma*, and three of the aliens are suitable for *Shadows*. (There is, however, nothing resembling a chirper.) There is a set of Vargr, but no Vargr among the adventurers. There is a Zhodani among the adventurers, but not (yet) a set of Zhodani.

All in all, a B plus effort. Recommended to *Traveller* fans and SF miniatures gamers in general.

*–Forrest Johnson*

# THANK YOU

## H.G. Wells Awards

**System 7 Napoleonics**
*Best Historical Figure Series*

**System 7 Napoleonics Rules**
*Best Miniatures Rules*

**Kinunir, Adventure One for Traveller**
*Best Role-Playing Adventure*

**The Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society**
*Best Professional Role-Playing Magazine*

## Game Designers' Guild Awards

**Double Star**
*Guild Select Award*

**Bloodtree Rebellion**
*Guild Select Award*

**White Death**
*Guild Select Award*

**Road to the Rhine**
*Guild Select Award*

## Fire & Movement Readers' Poll Awards

**White Death**
*Best Operational Game*

**Road to the Rhine**
*Best Strategic Game* and *Best Game of the Year*

**Frank Chadwick**
*Designer of the Year*

Thank you to all the gamers who have made GDW games so popular. And thank you to all the gamers whose satisfaction earned GDW the awards listed above at Origins 1980. Look for these future award-winners from GDW at your favorite local hobby or game shop in the near future:
Azhanti High Lightning · The Fall of France · Asteroid · Twilight's Peak · Assault · Tacforce

# Game Designers' Workshop

***TRAVELLER—ROLE PLAYING GAMES—HISTORICAL SIMULATIONS***
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PEN-LATOL'S WORLD (Group One); $7.95. Approved for use with *Traveller.* One 32-page mimeographed 8½" x 11" booklet, 23" x 34" map, cover sheet, bagged. One referee and 7-12 players; playing time indefinite. Published 1980.

Published by an apparently new company, PEN-LATOL'S WORLD is an approved adventure for *Traveller.* And, if nothing else, the designers of this adventure are most ambitious. PEN-LATOL'S WORLD concerns the adventures of a scientific/mining team on the aforementioned world. It seems to encompass the entire planet in its scope, including a complete alien society, most of the planet's biosphere and the customary ruins of a lost civilization, now degenerated into barbarism. This time it is an abandoned city and an ancient planetary defense fortress situated inside a mountain – both well stocked with dangerous animals. A large, though flimsy, map illustrates the major planetary terrain features for the purposes of cross-country travel.

The most notable facet of PEN-LATOL'S WORLD is its alien race, the Cleashitar. Group One has created in these six-limbed beings a fascinating – if improbable – alien race (though it is possible to detect traces of the Green Martians of E.R. Burroughs' *John Carter* series). Unfortunately, the Cleashitar aren't *quite* alien enough. A highly psionic human race could have served just as well. It's a good try, however, and perhaps one that will lead to more aliens in *Traveller.* In any event, the Cleashitar are a step in the right direction.

The main weakness of PEN-LATOL'S WORLD is that much of appears to have been a last-minute rush job. An abundance of typos clutter the rules booklet and numerous omissions hinder one's understanding and total enjoyment of the adventure. Several encounter situations seem incomplete, the floor plans for the miners' camp are left unexplained and it is often difficult to correlate the small maps in the booklet with the main map – which, incidentally, doesn't even indicate which direction is north. A small typewritten slip lying loose in the bag was all that revealed the map's scale. Clearly the game could have stood one more editing before release.

All in all, however, Group One deserves a "GT" (for "Good Try") rating on this offering. Their next attempt should be pretty good. Considering the price and the game's incompleteness, though, I'd have to recommend it only to those who don't mind filling in a lot of gaps. For such highly imaginative gamers, PEN-LATOL'S WORLD will provide a wealth of playing situations for any *Traveller* campaign.

*–William Barton*

SCOUTS AND ASSASSINS (Paranoia Press); $3.00. Designed by Donald P. Rapp. Approved for use with *Traveller.* One 10-page 5½" x 8" booklet and 11" x 17" insert. Number of players and playing time variable. Published 1980.

For those *Traveller* players who have yearned for "more clout for Scouts" and yet have wanted something more "official" than the variants that have appeared in *The Dragon* and elsewhere, Paranoia Press has produced a *Traveller* supplement that should fill their longings – and more. SCOUTS & ASSASSINS not only features an expanded *Mercenary*-type character generation system for the scout service, but includes rules for creating an entirely new class of character – the assassin. In addition, this slim but meaty booklet contains a method for non-violently disposing of a character who fails to make his survival roll, but who is too good a character to be killed off, and an insert page with technical data and deck plans for the Serpent class scout ship, completely compatible with *Snapshot.*

SCOUTS AND ASSASSINS designer Donald Rapp is no novice to *Traveller*; his Serpent-class scout ship was featured in *The Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* during his first year and he is listed as a playtester for *High Guard.* His experience shows in how well these character generation systems mesh with the original *Traveller* systems. The scout system sends characters through a full year-by-year assignment schedule each term with a Scout Occupational Specialty (SOS) table, general and specific assignments, assignment resolution, and specific skill tables. New skills for scouts include xenology (for contacting alien sentient life forms), linguistics (for conversing with said aliens), and small ship tactics (for handling groups of scout ships).

Enlisting your character into the League of Assassins will prove most exciting – and dangerous (survival roll is even higher than that for scouts) – and will yield a formidable character with such skills as poisons/antidotes, unarmed combat, stealth, and disguise. He may even be awarded membership in the Assassins' Guild. And the Unfit for Service table was just *made* for the *Traveller* player who can't stand to see a character he's nursed through so much die on what was to be his last term in service.

The only problem I have with SCOUTS & ASSASSINS is that, even with the instructions, someone who is not familiar with *Mercenary* may experience some difficulty in following this system. This should, of course, be no trouble to an experienced player. The Unfit for Service section is also unclear as to whether discharged characters still receive mustering out benefits, so players will have to decide this on their own.

Until GDW publishes their own, if you want an "official" scout system, SCOUTS & ASSASSINS is it.

*–William A. Barton*

SPACEFARER'S GUIDE TO PLANETS: SECTOR ONE (Phoenix Games); $8.00. Designed by Ed Lipsett. Play aid for use with SF role-playing games such as *Traveller, Space Patrol, Space Quest,* etc. One 60-page 8½" x 11" book. Number of players and playing time variable. Published 1979.

SECTOR ONE contains descriptions of nearly all your favorite planets from science fiction literature, from Suzette Elgin's Abba to Lin Carter's Zha, from Frank Herbert's Arrakis to Issac Asimov's Terminus, all couched in gaming terms so that they can be easily inserted into any campaign. Now your characters can tread the sands of Dune, fight the gravity of Mesklin, or brave the wrath of the Deathworld, Pyrrus. And, in addition to the planetary descriptions, SECTOR ONE includes encounter charts to determine if your spacecraft might have a run-in with a ship from any of these worlds and star system generation tables that allow the referee to determine not only planetary characteristics, but star types, number of planets per system, moons per planet and whether or not the system has any "special" features such as black holes, Ringworlds, or Dyson Spheres.

Without question, SECTOR ONE is a study in completeness. Each planet listed in the book is thoroughly described with notes on physical make-up, the mentality of the dominant race, the planet's cultural quirks, its technology, imports and exports and any unique features, such as unusual flora or fauna or Imperial installations located on its surface. Each planet is assigned planetary statistic numbers, similar to the universal planetary profile used in *Traveller,* for easy reference. Happily enough, the individual biography of each world is complete enough so that players should not have any trouble getting the feel of whatever planet they find themselves on.

The only problem evident with SECTOR ONE is that in being designed to be broad enough to fit into several SF role-playing systems, it doesn't quite succeed in fitting totally into any single system – a common flaw with such "universal" play aids. SECTOR ONE seems best suited to mesh with *Traveller,* which was probably the major influence behind its creation. It shouldn't be too difficult, however, for ingenious players to work SECTOR ONE into their favorite system.

SPACEFARER'S GUIDE TO PLANETS: SECTOR ONE should prove a valuable play aid in the hands of any creative referee.

*–William A. Barton*

STARSHIPS & SPACECRAFT (Judges Guild); $5.50. Designed by Dave Sering. Playing aid approved for use with *Traveller.* Three 22" x 34" three-color sheets. Published 1979.

Did you ever wonder exactly what a Type S Scout ship looked like? Or what shape a Type C Cruiser has? And just what *is* the interior configuration of a Type M Subsidized Merchant? If your *Traveller* campaign has ever suffered from such visual deficiencies, Judges Guild's STARSHIPS & SPACECRAFT will be a boon to your mind's eye. This play aid consists of three large sheets of deck plans, technical data, and summary sheets of all the standard types of starships and auxilliary craft listed in *Traveller* Book 2 (*Starships*). One side of each of two sheets consists of deck plans color-coded in shades of blue, red, and black and white and laid out on a half-inch-square grid. The other side is filled with technical data on each starship auxilliary, accompanied by exterior drawings and descriptions. The third sheet has ship's summary sheets and ship's papers on one side and, on the other, deck plans (in black and blue only) and a large half-inch-square grid so that you can design your own ships should you wish.

The size of the deck plan grid is such that the plans are completely compatible with *Snapshot* (*Traveller* Game 2) and thus can be invaluable as an expansion set for that game, increasing their worth beyond their visual use in *Traveller* itself. And the designer of STARSHIPS & SPACECRAFT is to be congratulated for avoiding the too-common error of back-printing plans with data. The plans for any particular ship are on one sheet and the data for that ship is on the other, making reference possible without disrupting any on-board situation you've set up with counters or miniatures. Another nice touch of realism on these plans is the existence of "freshers" aboard each ship, laid out in convenient locations. I'd always wondered if one was just expected to eliminate wastes out the airlock, or wait until the next interstellar rest stop (ouch!). Now we know.

The only omissions I can find in STARSHIPS & SPACECRAFT is a lack of deck plans for the lifeboat, air/raft and ATV pictured.

Perhaps those will be included in the next such supplement, along with ships described in *Citizens of the Imperium*: the Corsair, Seeker, Lab ship, and Safari ship.

STARSHIPS & SPACECRAFT should prove quite helpful in making your *Traveller* campaign even more realistic to players. It deserves a place in your *Traveller* library.

*–William A. Barton*

THE TRAVELLER LOGBOOK (Judges Guild); $3.00. Designed by Dave Sering. Approved supplement to *Traveller*. One 62-page 8½" x 11" booklet. Published 1979.

If you're one of those *Traveller* players who, as a hot-shot ex-Imperial Marine, has no trouble decimating whole planets with your handy PGMP-14 Plasma gun, yet find you constantly lose your best characters and your finest starships when those loose sheets of paper on which they're recorded seem to be "gone with the solar wind," then rejoice! The LOGBOOK contains printed record sheets on which you can log up to 10 characters with their UPPs, skills, equipment, service records, names, ranks, etc. It also has summary sheets for six starships – including impressive ship's papers, and, in addition, nearly all the useful charts needed to generate *Traveller* characters from Books 1-3 and from *Mercenary* for the player's convenience. Not bad for $3.00! In fact, the LOGBOOK would make an excellent first purchase for that gamer who wants to try out the *Traveller* system without taking the full plunge of buying the game itself. (This is how I got my wife interested!)

Several additional features keep the LOGBOOK from being merely a digest of already released *Traveller* materials. There is a series of charts designed to fill in the personal background of *Traveller* characters from physical appearance tables, generating such characteristics as height, weight, quality of sight, hearing and taste, to social background determiners – including cultural motivation, number of parents (from none up to 2 dice + 1), their occupations, family rank, reason for adventuring, and more! These can be quite helpful in creating a character as a *role* to play, rather than as a mere extension of one's own personality. In its section on Starship Operation, the LOGBOOK brings all the tables and information on starship expenses and revenue, including an easier-to-read trade and speculation table than appeared in *Traveller*.

On the negative side (alas, there usually is one), the LOGBOOK has no provisions on its record sheets for skills – fleet tactics, gravitics, bow combat – listed in *High Guard* or *Citizens of the Imperium*, making it necessary to pencil such in should you desire to roll up a character from either of these rule sets. Neither can you easily record a ship built with components listed in *High Guard*. There are no spaces for particle accelerators, meson guns, or black globes on the LOGBOOK ship's summary sheets.

Overall, though, THE TRAVELLER LOGBOOK is well worth the price. In fact, no serious *Traveller* player should be without one.

*–William A. Barton*

# *ITHILIEN* CLASS - S-2233321-000000-00000-0

The Conundrum State Shipyards are pleased to announce the winner of the ship design contest (TSG 28) is Mar K. Chitt, formerly of the Imperial scouts. Of the 13 entries, his is not the most original, but it is (1) commodious, (2) well-equipped for its role as a deep exploration ship, and (3) cheap. As a special sign of favor, Her Splendiference, the Imperatrice Ithilien bestows her name upon the class. Chitt is instructed to report to the shipyards, Day 300, 1067 P.S., for the shakedown cruise of the prototype. It is anticipated that ships of the Ithilien class will be available for sale to the public after the shipyard satisfies the needs of the state.

Budget for the proposed ship class:

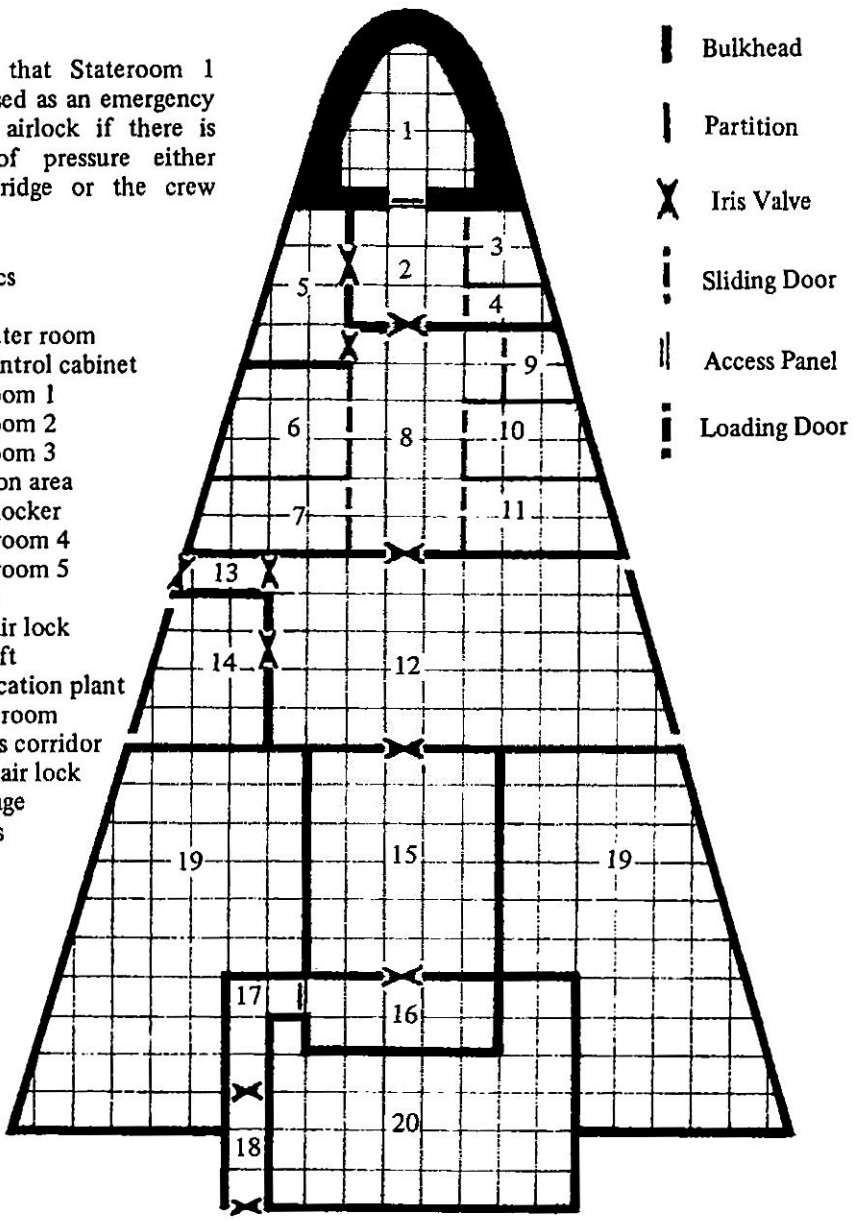
| ITEM | TONS | COST |
|---|---|---|
| 150 ton hull | – | 15 |
| Cone configuration | – | 1.5 |
| Power plant 3 | 4.5 | 18 |
| Jump 3 | 6 | 24 |
| Maneuver 3 | 7.5 | 5.25 |
| Fuel purification | 15 | .13 |
| Fuel scoops | – | .15 |
| Bridge | 20 | .75 |
| Computer 2 | 2 | 9 |
| Hardpoint | 1 | .1 |
| 5 staterooms | 20 | 2.5 |
| Air raft | 4 | .6 |
| Programs* | – | 2.1 |
| Cargo | 20 | – |
| Tankage | 50 | – |
| TOTALS | 150 | 79.08 |

(All costs are given in millions of credits)

*Programs: Jump 1 (.1), Jump 2 (.3), Jump 3 (.4), Maneuver (.1), Navigation (.4), Auto/Evade (.5), Library (.3).

(Note that Stateroom 1 can be used as an emergency intraship airlock if there is a loss of pressure either in the bridge or the crew area.)

1. Avionics
2. Bridge
3. Computer room
4. Fire control cabinet
5. Stateroom 1
6. Stateroom 2
7. Stateroom 3
8. Common area
9. Ship's locker
10. Stateroom 4
11. Stateroom 5
12. Cargo
13. Port air lock
14. Air raft
15. Purification plant
16. Drive room
17. Access corridor
18. Stern air lock
19. Tankage
20. Drives



# Featured Review:

# AZHANTI HIGH LIGHTNING

## by William A. Barton

*There was a small, metallic "click!" – more felt than heard – as the magnetic boots of the Solomani's vacc suit made contact with the hull of the* ***Bard Endeavour.*** *Turning his head slightly, he was rewarded with the sight of the rest of his party touching down on the crippled Imperial warship. It would only take his team minutes to force open the doors into the boat dock, he knew – and then what? He wondered if he'd live to see Old Terra again. It had to be done, though. The capture of such a ship as the* ***Endeavour*** *with its advanced weaponry could turn the tide of the war – could even make possible a Solomani victory and – at last! – independence from the Empire.*

*The doors flew open. Bracing himself, the Solomani officer flung himself into the opening – for Solomani independence! – followed closely by his men. Into the withering fire of a dozen Imperial Marines. . . .*

Nobody ever promised that "Adventure Aboard an Imperial Starship" would be easy. But it can be challenging – and fun – with GDW's new *Traveller* game, AZHANTI HIGH LIGHTNING. Designed to be easily integrated into the *Traveller* role-playing system, AHL is, nevertheless, a fascinating game in itself. Even strict boardgame addicts who disdain all forms of role-playing should find plenty to pique their interest aboard the *High Lightning.*

The first thing one notices when picking up this game is the beautiful cover painting of the *Azhanti High Lightning* herself – quite attractive, that! The second will be the $22.00 price tag – ouch! And this on a box no bigger than that of *Imperium*? Rest assured, it's worth it. Once you see the components, I think you'll agree.

The insides of AZHANTI consist of a sheet of 240 color-coded counters of Imperial crewmen and marines, intruders, adventurers, robots, Zhodani, the wolf-like Vargr, plus alien blobs, wine (for one scenario) and wound markers; a combat chart; two full-sized dice (a relief after the miniscule dice some companies include); a 44-page rules booklet *plus* a 44-page *Traveller* supplement (No. 5) on *Lightning Class Cruisers*; and 14 (count 'em – 14!) sets of full-color deck plans of the various levels found on the *Azhanti* or her sisters (these alone are almost worth the price of the entire game). All components measure up to GDW's usual high standards of quality.

The deck plans, each representing several decks of the same type, are nicely done with details that include color-coded conduits, hatches and valves and even individual consoles and chairs on the various bridges and gunnery decks. Each deck is laid out with a half-inch square grid, compatible with those of *Traveller* game 2, *Snapshot,* and the Judges Guild *Starships and Spacecraft* deck plans, to regulate the movement of the counters or of 15mm miniatures. All details and areas on each deck are numbered and are explained in the "technical manual" section of the supplement.

The supplement itself, in addition to containing the deck-by-deck breakdown, outlines the entire history of the Lightning class, gives general specifications for the ships, names all the ships in the class, cites differences between those ships serving as naval cruisers and those converted to fleet auxiliaries, commercial service or to the Scout service, and translates the various ships into *High Guard* statistics – from both first *and* second editions of *High Guard.* A handy little booklet for *Traveller* lovers who are into *High Guard*-style fleet actions. GDW should consider releasing this separately later on.

The rules for AZHANTI are quite well-written with very few errors or ambiguities visible. They clearly set out all the general rules for play, the special rules and the advanced rules in such a manner that it isn't necessary to puzzle over them for several hours before figuring out how to play. All the rules are simple enough to understand – yet complex enough to add depth to the game. These rules take up the first two-thirds of the rules booklet, the final third consisting of ten different scenarios ranging from the Solomani attempt to take the *Bard Endeavour* at "The Battle of Kagukhasaggan 2" to a plan by mutineers to turn over the Oberlindes Lines transport *Emissary* to

the Vargr Extents in "Brother Wolf." Guidelines are given for creating original scenarios, and instructions are added for converting the AZHANTI system into *Traveller* and vice versa.

Some glitches did creep in. For example, there is some confusion in the rule on characters receiving collateral damage from explosions in their square. One sections says that *all* characters in the same square receive collateral damage if an explosion occurs in the square, and another says all characters in the same square receive collateral damage on a roll of 8 or more – *unless* they are specified as automatically suffering such (which according to the preceding section would be everybody – so why roll the die at all?). There is also some discrepancy between the rules and the counters on warbot weaponry. The rules state that warbots are armed with fusion guns, the counters, plasma guns. Most of these flaws can be easily remedied by an agreement between opponents.

The AHL game system involves, like its predecessor, *Snapshot*, the use of Action Points. All actions on the part of a character – movement and combat – are made through the expenditure of the character's Action Point allotment. *Snapshot* veterans, however, may not find it such a snap converting to AZHANTI. Action Point usages between the two games are quite dissimilar.

The game is liable to go pretty slow, at least the first few times played, due both to the necessity of keeping track of APs spent and to the numerous steps involved in each turn. These consist of a decision phase, in which each player secretly decides what each of his characters will do that turn, and five action phases for the character to carry out his "orders." Each action phase consists of four sequential steps: covering fire, movement, aimed fire, snap shots. All action in a phase is otherwise simulataneous. The necessity of going through all these steps in each turn can make for slow going, especially in the scenarios involving large numbers of characters, and involves quite a bit of paper work. A game turn that represents only 15 seconds of game time could easily last several minutes of real time. Strangely enough, though, the system works. Once players get used to the game, it moves fairly smoothly, though not at breakneck speed. One great aid is that the AP costs for all actions are printed on a separate combat chart for easy reference, eliminating the need to leaf through the rules, as in *Snapshot*. The six AP per phase limit also alleviates such unrealistic occurences as a character with high APs running into a room of armed men, firing, and running out unscathed, as can happen in *Snapshot*.

The only real problem I see in the game's sequence of play – other than its length – involves the rule that a character, once commited to one of three actions (cover fire, aim, or move) in the decision phase cannot switch to any other action (though he can make a snap shot or melee) even should conditions change and a new opportunity present itself. He can only abort and wait until the next turn. This seems just a bit unrealistic, though the character's ability to make a snap shot (if he has enough points) or initiate melee (no point cost) does somewhat make up for this.

The combat system of AZHANTI HIGH LIGHTNING is the best feature of the game. In fact, GDW should seriously consider replacing the regular *Traveller* combat system with this or a similar system. Gone at last is the highly unrealistic concept of using armor as a determining factor in whether or not a target is hit (a legacy from D&D?) In AZHANTI, armor protects the target to a certain extent after he is hit, rather than making him harder to hit at all. Each weapon (guns only; blades and the like are strangely missing) is listed with an effective range, a long range and an extreme range, measured in squares on the deck plans. These ranges differ for each weapon. There is a specific to-hit roll for each range – 8+ at effective, 10+ at long, 12+ at extreme – modified only for weapon skill and target status (under cover, evading, etc.). Each weapon also has its own penetration rating which differs at each range; i.e., a weapon hit does more damage at effective range than extreme. Yes, AZHANTI HIGH LIGHTNING definitely deserves an "A" for its combat system.

Unfortunately, the same can't be said for the melee system. It is one of the least satisfying aspects of the game. The whole thing seems to be merely a simplified form of brawling (with characters engaging in fisticuffs or clubbing each other with gun butts). The method described elsewhere in the rules for converting *Traveller* characteristics to melee values appears to bear this out. It's almost as if someone, at the last moment, noticed that they'd overlooked a rule for close combat and threw together a melee system – no time for blades and the like. Still . . . it *does* work in the context of the game, and that *is* what counts. But – Golly Gee! – where are those cutlasses the Imperial Marines are always said to be wearing? And surely the wily Zhodani carry at least daggers! Ah, well. . . .

While we're on the subject of last-minute rushes, there is some evidence that AHL may have gone through one – at least in parts – in order for the game to be out in time for Origins. This is most evident in the technical manual. Several numbered items or areas on the deck plans were overlooked in the deck descriptions in the supplement. What, for instance, is location no. 20 on the Main Weapon Deck? Or location no. 10 on the lower level of the Power Plant Deck? Or no. 28 on the Gunnery Deck? And the Fighter Recovery Lock (location no. 16 on the Hangar Deck) isn't located on the map at all (though it is easy to guess by the description). Hopefully, these omissions will be corrected by GDW with an errata sheet.

In spite of such flaws, however, AZHANTI HIGH LIGHTNING still rates high in quality – far above the releases of a lot of other companies. It stands as a welcome addition to the *Traveller* family of games and deserves a place on the shelf of any science fiction gamer who enjoys a well-designed game that offers both complexity and playability. Designers Marc Miller and Frank Chadwick deserve a hefty round of applause for this offering. One wonders what they'll come up with next. All I can say is, after AZHANTI HIGH LIGHTNING, *Traveller* game 4 is going to have to be a real planet-buster to compete.

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# GAME DESIGN: Theory and Practice

# Part VI: More about Movement

by Nick Schuessler and Steve Jackson

*With Part VI, we continue our discussion of unit movement.*

### Putting it Together

So far, we have the level of play (strategic, operational, tactical), terrain types (elevation, water, foliage, man-made), and historical period (pre-gunpowder, pre-machine gun, and modern) affecting our determination of refined movement. And we haven't even gotten to the "chrome" yet: equipment, training, organization, leadership, morale, etc.

Before we get completely mired down, it might be instructive to take an example of how these factors would influence movement. We'll assume a unit of 3,000 troops, represented by a single counter. Each hex represents 10 mi., and each turn represents two days. Our unit has a base movement of 4 hexes/turn.

Our unit leaves a town where it has formed up and moves down a road. The base movement would probably hold: four hexes. The leader decides to move "cross country" through clear hexes. Believe it or not, the movement rate would probably halve from four to two hexes/turn. (Or, in terms of movement point costs, the road would cost one movement point per hex, the "clear" terrain would cost two movement points per hex.) Certainly this flies in the face of most "conventional wisdom," which treats "clear" terrain most generously.

In walking through the fields and vales, our unit encounters a wooded area 10 mi. across (the whole hex is designated "woods"). By rights, they should be able to pass through the woods in a little less than two days. We round up, and assess all four movement points for entering the woods hex.

The commander spots the enemy and wants to fight. Now if our unit was in a column, the last man in line is more than half a mile from the point of the column. So to get from a column to a line, we charge at least one movement point (equal to about four hours).

All the figures used here are for a World War II German infantry regiment – well-trained, well-led, and highly organized in matters like marches and deployment. Now imagine a mob in the same circumstances, and most of the movement point costs will at least double, and more likely triple and quadruple. In point of fact, movement in wargaming is always at a much faster tempo than in real life. Here we've had no mistaken orders, no surprises, and the advantage of seeing the whole map displayed exactly as it is. Even with "set-piece" conditions, the movement is much slower than the typical wargame. Of course, we could increase the turn length or change the hex scale to give the unit more movement points. But the basic point – big bunches of folks just don't move that fast – would remain the determining factor in refined movement.

### Base Statistics

After our example, it would be well to consider some basic statistics concerning movement:

• A body of troops walking covers about 3 mi/hr day or night. Under normal conditions, they can sustain this pace for about 7 or 8 hr/day. For shorter periods, the speed can increase to 4-5 mi/hr. The average man, unencumbered by equipment, can run about 8 mi/hr for 1-2 mi.

There are, of course, instances of "forced marches," where troops march continuously at 4-5 mi/hr for 12-20 hours without stopping. However, there is a fatigue factor that begins to set in, depending on physical conditioning involved.

This rate of march is determined by the unit organization and not the historical period, since it is based on the average walking pace. Even allowing for changes in physique throughout the ages, 20 mi/day is a good rule of thumb.

• Horses walk at about 6 mi/hr and can gallop at 10-15 mi/hr for 3-4 mi. Again, you can "force march" horses, but attrition will set in after the averages are exceeded.

• Large numbers of motorized vehicles move in convoy at about 15-20 mi/hr. The determining factor is the speed of the slowest vehicle, not the fastest.

• Horse-drawn wagons move the same as infantry. Wagons are more affected by bad road and terrain conditions than either infantry or motorized vehicles.

Now smaller sized units will always move faster than larger units. These averages are based on groupings. Three thousand men average about 20 mi/day; 30 men could probably do 30-35 mi/day without ill-effect. Single vehicles travel at their rated speed rather than a road march speed.

Off-roads tend to halve all of these averages, with, perhaps, more severe penalty for wagons. Cities and towns have the same effect as off-road. One of the more interesting fictions in wargaming is that you can move through a built-up area at road speed. This is simply not true in most cases. Bridged water barriers will have the effect of off-road because of the "funneling" created by the bridge. Unbridged water barriers are impassible by wagons and many vehicles, but can often be traversed by infantry.

Foliage has two effects on movement: first, it obviously slows down the rate of march; second, it tends to disperse the formation. Thus, it takes time to assemble your troops when you come out of the woods or forest.

Elevation is mostly a question of how much. Moderate rolling hills with an easy gradient will have only a marginal effect on the rate of speed. A steeper gradient, or longer gradient, can slow a march to a minimal speed. On a true mountain, you

may prohibit any movement to all but specialized units.

### Supply Effects on Movement

Earlier we talked about the varying importance of the supply train in different historical periods. The loss of a supply train, or a supply train located too far from the main body, will have an effect on movement. Up to the introduction of gunpowder, the supply train was of negligible importance, and probably shouldn't even be represented. The one place where it would be important is in siege operations against a fortified area. Here the absence of the supply train would simply prohibit an attack.

With the introduction of gunpowder, the supply train becomes more critical. A lack of powder, and fodder for the horses hauling the cannon will eventually halt operations. We can generalize that in all strategic level games, the supply train should be represented by a counter; in operational games it can be "abstracted" to a "supply line"; and in tactical level play, it is simply factored into the combat strength or made a special rule for the given scenario.

The effect of supply on movement is indirect. Two factors will begin to influence operations. First, time that might have been spent marching must be used to forage. Second, there will be a reluctance to engage in battle. Each soldier carries a "basic load" of ammunition. This basic load is normally exhausted in an engagement of any intensity. If there is no resupply available, movement will tend to avoid engagements, and only fight when no other course is available (raw self-defense).

In the post-machine gun era, the effect of supply on movement is pronounced. You might entreat a man or horse for a little extra effort, but pleading with a tank out of gas is futile. Again, the effect on walking troops is about the same. They still have a "basic load," and (for a while) their rate of march is about the same. Lack of supply reflects the breakdown of cohesion in the unit, which makes efficient and coordinated movement more difficult.

For vehicles and artillery, there is also a "basic load." But because these arms tend to be used in the most intense fighting, they are depleted somewhat faster than the infantry units. Also, the lack of timely resupply leaves the units virtually motionless. So in calculating the effects, we would say that after a motorized unit has moved (used its basic load) or fought, the lack of resupply would completely prohibit future movement.

### A La Mode

One of the more recent concepts in wargaming – which has a direct bearing on movement – is *mode*. At the strategic level, the question of whether a formation is in line or column is represented by movement point costs. But at the operational and tactical level, how the unit is formed up (mode) will have an impact on its rate of march.

Normal marches are in column. This mode makes most efficient use of the road network. However, as the unit gets closer to an engagement, it tends to redeploy from a column to a line. The line allows full utilization of the unit in terms of firepower. Now, it is very efficient to march in column; it is very bad to fight in column (your "T" gets crossed). It is very efficient to fight in a line formation, but travelling in line is slow. Nearly the entire unit is off-road, and keeping the line "on line" is a difficult exercise in command and control. If one flank encounters especially bad terrain, the whole line slows down to that pace.

In modern times, the line is a fairly flexible affair, albeit turtle-paced. For earlier historical periods, getting into line was a complicated affair, and once in line the only movement was forward.

For purposes of calculating movement costs, we can formulate some general rules concerning mode. First, changing mode should be reflected in some movement point (time equivalent) costs. When you're going from line to column, you're not doing anything else; remember that guy a mile and a half to the rear. Second, road movement is only available when the unit is in column. Third, when in line mode, the direction of movement should be somewhat limited. You shouldn't be allowed sudden turns without some movement point costs. Just imagine wheeling a mile-long line to a perpendicular course.

### Crowds and Confusion

If we consider for a moment just what's going on when four or five counters are stacked in a hex, we can see that the hex capacity should also have an effect on movement. The hex scale gives us a fair indication of how many units can be reasonably supported in that particular area. If that area is already occupied to capacity, the introduction of a new unit will probably have some adverse effect on movement.

The effect, though, is somewhat problematical. In a situation where strong traffic control procedures are used, it might be possible for a unit to move through at its normal rate. On the other hand, a wrong turn or a broken down vehicle could begin a chain reaction that leaves the whole hex utterly confused. To further complicate matters, the mode of the other units in the hex need to be considered. For example, it would be easier for a unit in a column to move through if all the other units were in line formation.

A more serious situation occurs when a unit retreats into a hex. Oftentimes the best traffic control is negated by fear and self-preservation, and the probability of a mess is increased.

So what's the effect? Well, if the disintegration takes place, there will be a cost in movement points (time) while the affected units re-form. Usually this would be handled by some kind of stacking limit, a die roll for disruption if the limit is exceeded, and then a movement penalty if the disruption occurs.

### Chrome and Trimmings

The number of things that can influence movement is nearly unlimited. In dealing with terrain, supply, mode, and stacking we have looked at the basics – items which ought to be explicitly incorporated into a game design or at least considered and consciously rejected (or "factored in") for playability.

For the sadistic designer, there are number of other consideration. However, we should note that the actual effect on movement is marginal. If your base movement is "6" and you increase that by "1" for whatever reason, you're saying that this "something" will result in a 16% improvement. Perhaps that's true, but it seems that the training, leadership, organization, or whatever would be pretty significant to work out to 16%. In fact, the trend is to equalize movement for like type units, right down to where we don't even print the movement factor on the counter.

When we get into the real chrome, we end up saying more of such-and-such will result in better movement. As for precise figures, or even good approximations – well, that's where the artistry of the designer comes into play:

- A better led unit will move faster than a poorly led unit.
- A unit with better communications will move faster.
- A better trained unit will move faster.
- A "veteran" unit will move faster than a "green" unit.
- A unit with high morale will move faster than a unit with poor

morale.

- A unit in pursuit immediately after a victory will not move as fast as a unit fleeing from a defeat. Curious but true. Apparently there is less incentive in the "thrill of victory" than in the "agony of defeat."
- When units have been re-formed after an engagement, a victorious one will move faster than a defeated unit.
- The presence of a specific leader will cause a unit to move faster; the higher ranking the leader, the faster the movement.

Finally, we should add a note on the weather. There are certain historical instances where bad weather favored one side or the other; the Russian winter of 1941 is usually cited. In fact, the effect of weather is rather uniform and simple. You don't move or fight in really bad weather. It is possible to devise complicated weather rules and move low pressure areas across the map. All that happens is that both players sit and move the game turn marker, waiting for the weather to improve. Then they get back to playing the game.

For strategic level games, you probably need some kind of weather rules. The turns are in weeks or months, and the seasons do change. But even here, it really doesn't matter whether the weather arrives on a fixed schedule or as a result of the die. When the autumn rains or the winter snows come, the effects will either stop movement or allow it to continue on a limited basis. Either way, it nets out.

In operational and tactical gaming, weather rules are either a curiosity to enhance a scenario or a nuisance which slows down play. Whenever you can, leave the weather to meteorologists. Where you must include it, keep it as simple as possible.

*Next: Combat and Play Sequence*


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# Company Report: YAQUINTO GAMES

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The reasons for this success are not mysterious. We operate on two simple maxims. We design games that people like to play (and play more than once or twice), and we subscribe to the basic truth that we need you, the gamers, a lot more than you need us.

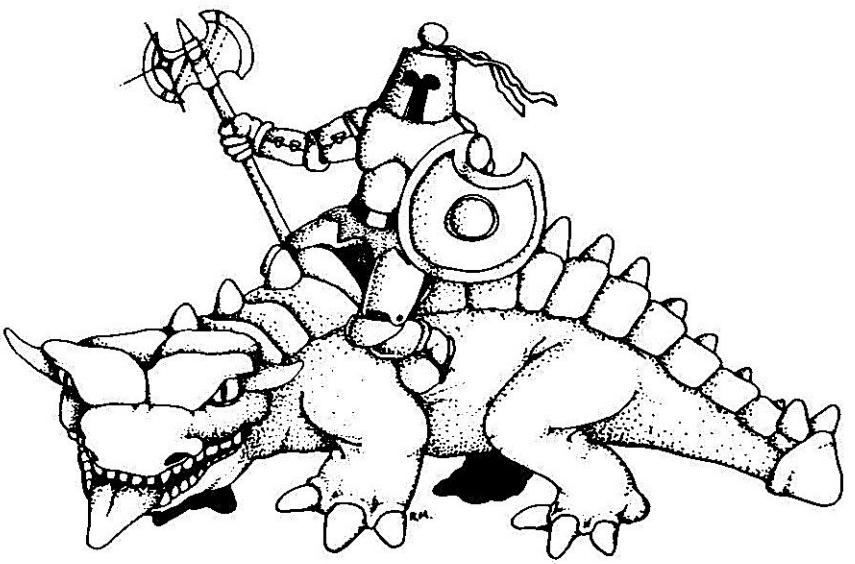
Good word-of-mouth advertising is one of the most valued assets a company can possess. When Craig Taylor and I were Battleline Publications in Georgia, it was word of mouth about *Wooden Ships and Iron Men, Alpha Omega, Submarine,* and *Air Force* that built our reputation. It was something we were used to. When we started Yaquinto without it, we realized how important it was and how long it would take to come into play. Not having it meant that our games had to be that much better if we were going to be successful. Good games are difficult enough to produce, but games that will obtain good word-of-mouth advertising are very rare.

### Playtesting

We rely heavily on our playtesting process. On any given Saturday we host between 15 and 30 playtesters. These people are gamers, spending their leisure time (a commodity that is often more valuable then money) with our future games. They will not waste their time on a game that they do not enjoy. They will not tolerate a sloppy or clumsy game that is more trouble to play than it is worth. In short, they are our toughest critics.

### Designers

We don't force one or two staff people to produce one new idea after another.



We actively seek designs from free-lance designers. True, we waste a lot of time culling submissions, but we find enough jewels among the stones to make it worthwhile. For example, of the 23 titles in our line, 11 came from outside sources.

### The Album Games

We released the first Album Games last May. When we first discussed the idea, we knew it could be a tremendous dollar value to the consumer. We also knew it would be a radically different packaging concept that the consumer might turn down cold. After much discussion, we decided to try it. In-house tests determined that the physical components would work, but there was still not the slightest hint whether the consumer would accept it. We displayed prototypes at the HIA trade show, where distributors ordered them with guarded enthusiasm. In May we shipped them, and held our breaths.

If the response had been unfavorable, we would have been in trouble. If it had been total rejection, the financial bind would have been severe.

Two weeks after the first shipments, the distributors started calling to reorder. They were having no trouble placing them in the retail outlets. But we still had to await the important reactions – those of the consumer. Happily, our nerves were not frayed much longer. Within a matter of days we started receiving letters of praise from gamers. Now, a short 2½ months after the original shipment, we are preparing to reprint two of the original Album Games, with the other two to follow soon after.

### Future Plans

Several more Album Games, on a variety of subjects, are in the works. The big Yaquinto project at the moment is a boardgame based on the hit TV series *Dallas*. Look for it before too long.

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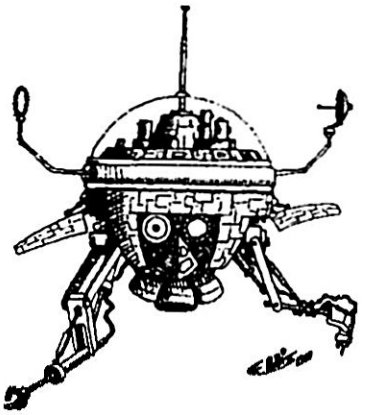
# DEUS EX MACHINA



# Calculator Play Aids

*This month, instead of Bruce Webster's regular column, we have a special guest column on calculators in wargames by W.G. Armintrout of Tooele, Utah.*

### HP-25 at War

Programming a calculator is simple. Anyone can do it. Just to prove my point, here are three programs for the Hewlett-Packard HP-25 which I managed to come up with. If you own an HP-25, these will be immediately useful to you. If you own any other brand of calculator, you can no doubt adapt these programs with a minimum of trouble. If you don't even own a programmable, at least you'll be moderately exposed to the great Light which the silicon chip is dishing out upon the world.

The three programs are – LINE OF SIGHT; RISKIER; and BORG THE PROGRAMMABLE.

### Line of Sight

The programmable calculator can make mincemeat out of those imposing formulae that up to now have kept a lot of us away from some extra-complex games. The example at hand is line-of-sight as treated in SPI's *Great Battles of the American Civil War* series.

Basically, the problem is to tell if your artillery can shoot at that cavalry when hills and dales of at least five different elevations are in the way. The game provides a Line of Sight gauge, but it is a violent pain to use. It also provides the Line of Sight Algorithm:

Line of sight is clear if:

$$\frac{H}{D} \geq \frac{hp-5}{dp}$$

where H = difference in height between attacker and target
D = distance in hexes from attacker to target
hp = difference in height between obstacle and attacker OR target (whichever is the lowest)
dp = distance in hexes from obstacle and attacker OR target (whichever has the lowest elevation)

This can be arranged to look like this:

$$E_1 \geq \frac{D_h(E_h-5) - D_oE_h}{D_h - D_o}$$

where $E_1$ = height of attacker or target (whichever is least)
$E_h$ = height of attacker or target (whichever is greatest)
$E_o$ = height of the obstacle
$D_h$ = distance in hexes from attacker to target
$D_o$ = distance in hexes from obstacle to the attacker OR defender (whichever has the lowest elevation)

This can be used to put together a program that will accept $E_h$, $E_o$, $D_h$, and $D_o$, and reply with an elevation which, when compared with $E_1$ will let you know if you can sight the enemy. Here is the program:

(Note: The "code" is shown for HP-25 users. It can be used to review the program after they have keyed it into their machine and to search for entry errors.)

| Step | Code | Entry | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 00 | | | |
| 01 | 23 07 | STO 7 | Stores $E_h$ in memory 7. |
| 02 | 74 | STOP | |
| 03 | 23 06 | STO 6 | Stores $D_h$ in memory 6. |
| 04 | 74 | STOP | |
| 05 | 23 05 | STO 5 | Stores $E_o$ in memory 5. |
| 06 | 74 | STOP | |
| 07 | 23 51 05 | STO + 5 | Adds terrain modifiers to memory 5. |
| 08 | 74 | STOP | |
| 09 | 32 | CHS | |
| 10 | 23 04 | STO 4 | Stores a neg $D_o$ in mem. 4. |
| 11 | 23 61 07 | STO X 7 | $-D_oE_h$ is now in mem. 7. |
| 12 | 05 | 5 | |
| 13 | 23 41 05 | STO - 5 | $(E_o - 5)$ is now in mem. 5. |
| 14 | 24 06 | RCL 6 | |
| 15 | 23 51 04 | STO + 4 | $(D_h - D_o)$ is now in mem. 4. |
| 16 | 23 61 05 | STO X 5 | $D_h(E_o - 5)$ is now in mem. 5. |
| 17 | 24 05 | RCL 5 | |
| 18 | 23 51 07 | STO + 7 | $[D_h(E_o - 5) - D_oE_h]$ is now in mem. 7. |
| 19 | 24 04 | RCL 4 | |
| 20 | 23 71 07 | STO ÷ 7 | Final result is in mem 7. |
| 21 | 24 07 | RCL 7 | Mem 7 is displayed. |
| 22 | 13 00 | GTO 00 | Program resets itself and stops. |

To use:

1. Key program into calculator.
2. Enter $E_h$, press R/s key, and wait until calculator stops working.
3. Enter $D_h$, press R/s and wait.
4. Enter $E_o$, press R/s and wait.
5. Enter terrain modifiers. (Different values are added according to the terrain in the obstacle hex. See rule 9.72.)
6. Enter $D_o$. R/s.
7. The calculator will now give its reply. If the number it provides is less than

or equal to $E_1$, then you've got a clear line of sight and can open fire. If not, you can't shoot.

Example:

A Union battery is in a cornfield (elevation = 100 ft). A Confederate cavalry unit is 8 hexes away, on a hill (elevation = 250 ft). In between is a small hill two hexes from the Union battery (elevation = 150 ft), occupied by Union supply wagons. Is there a clear line of sight?

$E_h = 250$ $D_h = 8$ $E_o = 150$

Modifier = 10 $D_o = 2$

Plugging these into the program grants the result – 123.33. Since this number is not less than or equal to $E_1$ (100 ft), the line of sight is blocked.

This program can be used in under five seconds, eliminates plodding human calculations, and even adds a little accuracy to the game. Without my programmable, I doubt I would play a game like this.

Now maybe one of you out there can come up with some programs to speed up *Vector 3*?

### Riskier

If your machine has enough memory and sufficient speed, you could put an entire CRT in there and forget about die rolling. My calculator hasn't the memory. As for speed . . . well. I can roll three dice faster than it can generate the total of three random numbers which range from 1-6. But even my HP-25 can handle a daffy little combat system for the popular boardgame *Risk*.

The program is not exactly a rulebook *Risk*. Victory is determined by straight odds and a random number generator. If the attacker has 3 units and the defender 1 unit, for example, the attacker has a 75% chance of victory. The formula is:

$$X(A + B) - A$$

where X = random number from .00 to .99

A = number of attacker units

B = number of defender units

If the result is negative, the attacker wins. If the result is positive, defender wins.

Losses, however, are figured without any regard to the odds (which is why this program is *Riskier* . . . you always risk the potential loss of all your attacking units!) The entire formula is:

[X(A + B) - A] (B/A) - .5 if an attacker's victory

[X(A + B) - A] (A/B) + .5 if a defender's victory

The program should accept the number of attackers and the number of defenders, and reply with losses for the loser. Here is my program:

| Step | Code | Entry | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 00 | | | |
| 01 | 23 07 | STO 7 | Stores A in memory 7. |
| 02 | 74 | STOP | |
| 03 | 23 06 | STO 6 | Stores B in memory 6. |
| 04 | 24 07 | RCL 7 | |
| 05 | 51 | + | |
| 06 | 23 05 | STO 5 | Stores A + B in mem 5. |
| 07 | 15 73 | gPI | Steps 7-13 are a random number generation sequence |
| 08 | 24 00 | RCL 0 | They generate X. |
| 09 | 51 | + | |
| 10 | 05 | 5 | |
| 11 | 14 03 | f $y^x$ | |
| 12 | 15 01 | gFRAC | |
| 13 | 23 00 | STO 0 | |
| 14 | 24 05 | RCL 5 | |
| 15 | 61 | X | X(A + B) is on display. |
| 16 | 24 07 | RCL 7 | |
| 17 | 41 | - | |
| 18 | 23 04 | STO 4 | X(A + B) - A in mem 4. |
| 19 | 15 41 | gX<0 | |
| 20 | 13 30 | GTO 30 | If X(A + B) - A is neg, go to step 30. |
| 21 | 24 04 | RCL 4 | |
| 22 | 24 06 | RCL 6 | |
| 23 | 71 | ÷ | |
| 24 | 24 07 | RCL 7 | |
| 25 | 61 | X | |
| 26 | 73 | . | |
| 27 | 05 | 5 | |
| 28 | 51 | + | Final result has been arrived at. |
| 29 | 13 38 | GTO 38 | Skip to 38. |
| 30 | 24 04 | RCL 4 | |
| 31 | 24 07 | RCL 7 | |
| 32 | 71 | ÷ | |
| 33 | 24 06 | RCL 6 | |
| 34 | 61 | X | |
| 35 | 73 | . | |
| 36 | 05 | 5 | |
| 37 | 41 | - | Final result has been arrived at. |
| 38 | 14 01 | fINT | Result is made into an Integer. |
| 39 | 15 61 | gX≠0 | |
| 40 | 13 00 | GTO 00 | If result ≠ 0, reset program and stop. |
| 41 | 13 07 | GTO 7 | Otherwise, go back to step 7. |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To use:

1. Key the program into calculator.

2. Initialize the Seed. Place any number from .00 to .99 in memory 0. This starts the random number generator. You only need to do this once, after keying the program in.

3. Enter A. R/s. Wait.

4. Enter B. R/s.

5. The calculator will now give its reply. If the number is negative, those are the losses for the defender. If positive, those are the attacker's losses.

6. To run the program again, return to step 3 and enter A.

Example:

Place .49 in register 0 as a Seed.

The attacker, with 33 pieces in BRAZIL, is assaulting an enemy NORTH AFRICA which contains 18 pieces. Entering these into the program grants a result of "2" – the attacker loses 2 units.

The attack continues – 30 pieces against 18 pieces. The result is "-5" and the defender loses 5 pieces.

The attack can continue as long as the attacker has at least two units in BRAZIL (one to attack with, one to garrison the country with).

This program, while hardly a great advance in programming, does give some idea of how a programmable calculator with enough memory and speed can supplant the CRT and dice in a normal game. In fact, such a development could lead to such unique developments as the *variable* CRT or the *unknown* CRT (that is, known only to the calculator).

**Borg the Programmable**

Lastly, here's a simple program that aims to provide an opponent to be outguessed. The game is Metagaming's half-microgame *Oneworld*, and this program selects Child transformations prior to combat.

The important thing is that this program includes a feedback cycle. It *thinks* . . . sort of. If it is throwing Blades at you and you are eating them up, then it will eventually learn not to do that and start using something else.

So here is the program. Note that it has some resemblance to the *Riskier* program given earlier:

| Step | Code | Entry | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 00 | | | |
| 01 | 15 73 | gPI | Random number generation sequence |
| 02 | 24 00 | RCL 0 | |
| 03 | 51 | + | |
| 04 | 05 | 5 | |
| 05 | 14 03 | f $y^x$ | |
| 06 | 15 01 | gFRAC | |
| 07 | 23 00 | STO 0 | |
| 08 | 24 07 | RCL 7 | |
| 09 | 24 06 | RCL 6 | |
| 10 | 51 | + | |
| 11 | 24 05 | RCL 5 | |
| 12 | 51 | + | |
| 13 | 61 | X | X(S + B + F) |
| 14 | 01 | 1 | |
| 15 | 51 | + | X(S+B+F)+1 |
| 16 | 24 07 | RCL 7 | |
| 17 | 41 | - | [X(S + B + F) + 1] - S |
| 18 | 15 51 | gX≥0 | |
| 19 | 13 26 | GTO 26 | If greater than or equal to 0, go to step 26. |
| 20 | 01 | 1 | |
| 21 | 74 | STOP | Program stops; displays "1." |
| 22 | 23 51 07 | STO + 7 | Add feedback to memory 7. |
| 23 | 24 07 | RCL 7 | |
| 24 | 14 07 | f ln | Program check – if memory 7 is less than or equal to 0, "error." |
| 25 | 13 01 | GTO 01 | Go to step 1. |
| 26 | 24 06 | RCL 6 | |
| 27 | 41 | - | [X(S + B + F) + 1] - (S + B) |
| 28 | 15 51 | gX≥0 | |
| 29 | 13 38 | GTO 38 | If greater than or equal to 0, go to step 38. |
| 30. | 02 | 2 | |
| 31 | 14 74 | fPAUSE | Program pauses, displays "2" |
| 32 | 01 | 1 | |
| 33 | 74 | STOP | Program stops, displays "1." |
| 34 | 23 51 06 | STO + 6 | Add feedback to memory 6. |
| 35 | 24 06 | RCL 6 | |
| 36 | 14 07 | f ln | Program check if mem. 6 is less than or equal to zero, "error." |
| 37 | 13 01 | GTO 01 | Go to step 1. |
| 38 | 03 | 3 | |
| 39 | 14 74 | fPAUSE | Program pauses, displays "3" |
| 40 | 01 | 1 | |
| 41 | 74 | STOP | Program stops, displays "1". |
| 42 | 23 51 05 | STO + 5 | Add feedback to memory 5. |
| 43 | 24 05 | RCL 5 | |
| 44 | 14 07 | f ln | Program check if memory 5 is less than or equal to zero, "error". |
| 45 | 13 01 | GTO 01 | Go to step 1. |
| 46 | 07 | 7 | |
| 47 | 23 51 05 | STO + 5 | Add "7" to memory 5. |
| 48 | 23 51 06 | STO + 6 | Add "7" to memory 6. |
| 49 | 23 51 07 | STO + 7 | Add "7" to memory 7. |

To use:

1. Key program into calculator.

2. Initialize the Seed. Place any number from .00 to .99 in memory 0. This starts the random number generator. You only need do this once, right after keying in the program.

3. Initialize the memories. Place any positive non-zero number into memories 7 (STONE), 6 (BLADE), and 5 (FOG). If the number is high, feedback will have a smaller effect on the program. If the number is low, the program has more chance of being interrupted by an "error" message. I would suggest "7"s in all memories, to begin with. You can change this with experience. This is only done once, immediately after keying the program in.

4. Press the R/s key.

5. The calculator will now give its reply – either a 1, 2, or 3. A "1" means Stone, a "2" means Blade, and a "3" means Fog.

6. The calculator will now give a new display – "1" – and stop. (If it already displayed a "1" is step 5, this will not occur).

7. You may now key in the feedback. If you do nothing, you give the calculator a positive feedback. If you press the CLX key – clearing the display – you give no feedback. If you press the CHS key – changing the "1" on the display to a "-1" – you are giving a negative feedback.

8. To start over, go to step 4.

*How it Works.* This program is basically an outgrowth of the *Riskier* program. It takes the total of three memories, multiplies them by a random number from .00 to .99 and compares the result to the three memories to determine a result. The memories indicate the chance that a 1, 2, or 3 will be displayed by the program as a result. If all memories contain a "7," there will be an equal chance of each result being chosen. But if all memories contain "7"s except memory 5, which contains a "14," then there is a 50% chance that memory 5 will prevail and a Fog will be chosen (that is, a "3" will be displayed on the calculator).

Example:

Initial values: SEED = .80
Memory 7 = 12 Memory 6 = 8
Memory 5 = 5

The result will be a 1, which indicates Stone.

SPECIAL CASE:

If the program stops and displays an

"error" message, something has gone wrong. To be particular, one of the three memories has gone to "0." If this is not remedied, the program will never again choose whatever aspect it is which is controlled by that memory. The fix?

Key in GTO 46, and press the R/s key. This puts a tiny subroutine into effect which adds some number – in this case a "7" – to all three memories. In this way, the operator does not actually know which memory went to "0" . . . which is important if he is trying to outguess the calculator.

The whole process depends on the fact that my calculator, if asked to take the natural log of 0, halts and says "error." This will not work if your calculator refuses to go along and say "error," or blink, or do something to alert the operator.

When the calculator stops once more, press the R/s key and you are back in normal running condition.

To integrate this program into *Oneworld* requires a few special rules, changing the process of combat but not making any important changes. This is because my program will generate only one transformation at a time. It could generate several at once, but that would complicate the feedback cycle beyond the talents of my programmable calculator.

1. *First Transformation.* The human player chooses his Children's aspects.
2. *Next Transformation.* The calculator now generates its first aspect.
3. *Resolution.* If a human player's unit is killed, place it in a special pile of units to your right. If a human player's unit kills the calculator's child, place the human's child in a special pile of units to your left. If the calculator's child is killed, eliminate it as normal.
4. *Feedback.* If the calculator's child was not killed, AND killed an enemy child, do nothing. If the calculator's child was killed AND did not kill an enemy child, press the CHS key. In all other cases, press the CLX key.
5. *Next Transformation.* If the calculator has no more children in the hex, combat is over. Units in the human player's right pile are placed in the baggie where dead units normally go. If the calculator has more children which have not yet transformed, press the R/s key and let it generate again.
6. *Resolution.* Do as in step 3, with a few exceptions. The calculator's child can only kill units of the human player which are not in his right pile. The calculator's child cannot be killed by human units in the left pile. If a unit in the left pile is killed, put it with all other dead units. If a unit in the right pile kills the calculator's child, it is also put into the normal dead pile.
7. *Feedback.* Same as before.
8. *Next Transformation.* See step 5.
9. *Resolution.* See step 6.

If both players have units remaining in the hex, go back to step 1 and begin another round of combat.

What are the advantages of this program? It allows a solitaire player to try to actually outguess an opponent. He can try to manipulate the calculator, throwing Stones at it until the calculator gets used to that and then switching to a new tactic. He can program the calculator for different initial tactics, and see how the tactics change as the calculator analyzes its feedback. He could watch to see what prevails. It is certainly a great improvement over using die rolls to govern aspects in a solitaire game.

It is only a simple program – after all, it doesn't propose strategy or move counters – but it does illustrate the bare essentials of a calculator opponent.

More can be done with programmable calculators. My HP-25, once the proud pioneer of its kind to find general usage, is now slipping into obsolescence. New models have vast improvements in memories and speed. Some come with audible beepers or musical capability. Some can spell, and no doubt some will be speaking passable English in a short while. But the real frontier lies with algorithms – the formulae or programs which the calculator uses to analyse its information and perform an output.

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# Ten Characters I Wouldn't Let In My Universe

Everyone who referees or plays a role-playing game – fantasy, science fiction, or what-have-you – has a favorite "non-player character." And, like as not, that NPC will be a truly outrageous specimen. Recently a discussion of truly memorable NPCs bore strange fruit indeed. The ten best (or worst) follow....

We haven't given specific characteristics for any particular game systems; after all, these are the characters we *don't* play. If you're brave enough to try them, working out the attributes for your system should be no problem. But don't say you weren't warned.

1. *Elvish Presley.* This half-elven bard is distinguished by his guitar, pointed ears, and pot-belly. He is a skilled bard with a high charisma (especially to the opposite sex). But not everyone likes his music....

2. *Daniel Boom.* An outdoors type, this hardy soul loves loud noises. His favorite hobby is bear-hunting with grenades. (Note, found carved on a shattered tree: "Dan'l Boom kilt a bar somewhere in this general vicinity....")

3. *The Wight Brothers.* A pair of undead bicycle mechanics. Killed in a flying gadget they built themselves, they still roam the earth, driven by their mad ambition to fly. Somehow. Anyhow! If you have the ability (magical or otherwise) to help them achieve their goal, they may befriend you. In addition to their undead powers, they are both expert mechanics. But if a party has (for instance) a Ring of Flying, and the Wights cannot bargain for it, they will try to take it.

4. *Captain Quirk.* Seems like an excellent sort when you run into him in a bar on Anthrax IV – cleancut, upright, tough and experienced. Hire him for your exploration trip and you'll be sorry. His hobby is exploring strange worlds . . . to seek out new highs. New incivilities. To boldly smoke what no man has smoked before! Away from civilization, he goes wholly ape, sampling native vegetation right and left. There is a small possibility that he'll die; a medium possibility he'll get sick; a medium possibility he will discover a new drug, which he'll then try to smuggle back home in your ship. His motto: "Space is warped. Me too!"

5. *Sailbad the Sinner.* The name tells it all. Board his ship and there's no telling where you'll end up. Or when. Or in what state of debauchery.

6. *Honda Kawasaki.* Samurai/paladin; likes to ride down orcs with his magic steed, Vroom. Honda wears dirty leather armor with strange runes on the back. Favors flexible weapons. He can fix anything.

7. *Earlick of Mendelbaum.* This perverted albino wanders around with his mighty sword, Sturmuntdrang. Under all circumstances, Earlick feels sorry for himself. He will endlessly bore his companions with pitiful stories about the fall of Mendelbaum, the deaths of all his family and friends, etc. He attributes all his misfortunes to bad luck. When confronted with danger, Earlick will either (a) draw Sturmuntdrang, wind up, and clip the man behind him, or (b) call on some force too powerful for him to control, in hopes it will do him a favor. Either way, there will soon be another disaster for him to add to his list of woes.

8. *Conman the Barbarian.* A big, tough warrior, covered with scars and bulging muscles. He will be found in a tavern, talking about his adventures and having "one more for the road." It will soon become apparent that Conman is itching to go after an immense treasure he knows of, guarded by some relatively trivial monsters. "Ah, if only I had a few stout shield-brothers (sigh)." Parties that go with Conman will vanish. Conman himself will be back in the tavern in a week or so, telling how his friends were devoured by dragons and he himself barely escaped. However, their weapons and gear will turn up in the local pawnshops. The tavernkeeper tolerates Conman, as he never seems to run out of drinking money.

9. *Fastfood and the Grey Muncher.* This rotund pair is pretty good in combat, but definitely not worth the supplies they consume. On an extended trip, you will run short of food. At this point, the duo will chorus, "Let's go foraging!" and will go seeking their favorite foods. Fastfood likes dragon tongue. The Grey Muncher favors barbecued balrog. If the party agrees to this mad proposal, they will inevitably find what they are looking for. If they decide to stay in camp, Fastfood and his companion will return a few hours later, belching and boasting of the meals they have had. They will talk endlessly about food, while the party gets hungrier and hungrier....

10. *Uselysses.* A heroic wanderer and misplaced (i.e., lost) king, renowned for his careful and cunning planning. He will usually be found waterlogged and unarmed, wandering in a labyrinth, carefully planning how he's going to get out. If the party which encounters him is attacked, Uselysses will cunningly plan his foes' defeat, even as they hack him to minestrone. Roll 1 die every day; on a roll of 6, another immortal being has become furious with him, and will make one attempt to obliterate him and the party. Whatever happens to anyone else, Uselysses will escape to continue his wandering.

*Guilty parties in the above crime were: For 1 through 4, Steve Jackson. 5: Ed Grotheus. 6-9: Forrest Johnson. 10: Aaron Allston. Some of you may have noted that there are really 12 characters, not 10. To you we say, so what?*

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# CONTEST

After reading the above article, you may think you can do better (or worse). Go right ahead! Write up the characters you wouldn't let in *your* universe (up to three entries per person) and send them to us. Characters will be judged on cleverness, inanity, and probable ability to throw a party into despair if they encounter them.

* * *

All entries become the property of TSG. First-place winner will receive a 12-issue subscription; second place will receive 6 issues. Their entries, and any especially good runners-up, will appear in TSG. We reserve the right to award no prizes if no entries of publishable quality are received. Entries must be postmarked no later than October 30, 1980.

# StarMaster

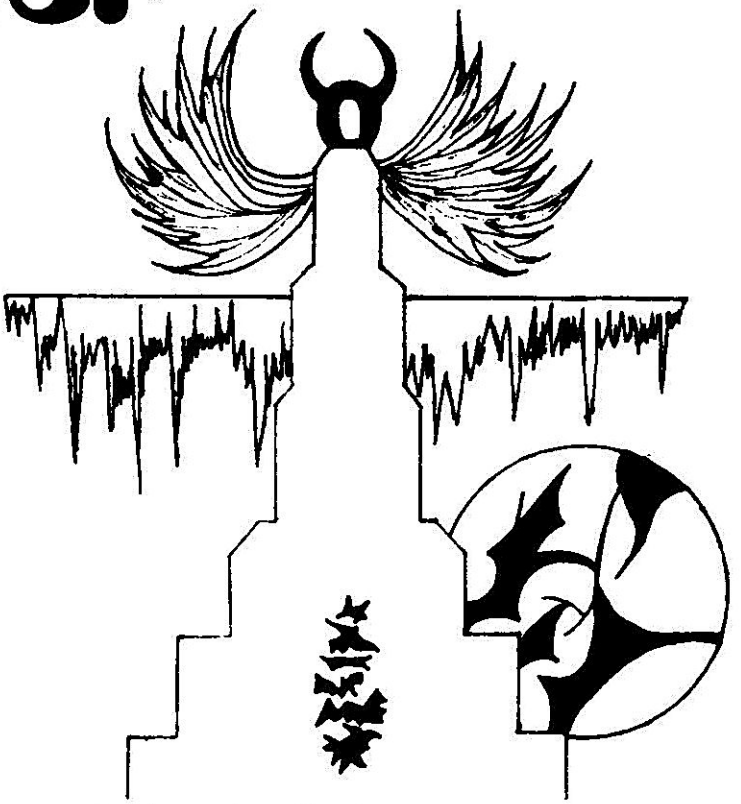
*Air screams around your ships as they enter the atmosphere. Missile-launchers fire deafeningly to port and starboard while atmosphere-fighters drop in shrieking dives from their hangers below. Warriors, tightly clenching their weapons, check their pressure suits one last time and climb in grim silence into their landing shuttles. In the distance five more heavy cruisers of your empire are firing and unloading their cargo, their hulls gleaming crimson in the light of the red sun above.*

*This is not a drill. Already laser and missile fire from the mile-wide guardian fortresses below have turned the sky into an exploding nightmare of smoke, fire, and fragmented metal. Planes and shuttles twist and dodge down towards a landscape rapidly becoming an inferno of flame and radiation.*

*This is no mere raid. For years your people had explored nearby systems without violence, trading technology to the primitive civilizations there in exchange for raw materials. Some species had even thought you gods.*

*Then you met the Aeratang. Merciless, brutal, they destroyed your exploring ships and began to slaughter your colonies. But you found their home planet and launched the greatest fleet your kind ever built to carry the war to your enemy. To fight for your very survival.*

*Will it be enough?*



Starmaster is a correspondence game of galactic exploration, diplomacy, and conquest allowing for interaction not only between each player and the worlds of the galaxy, but between the players themselves.

New players begin further out from the Galactic Center than established players allowing them to develop themselves among equals. You may lead a powerful reptilian race, carving out a vast empire of colony and subject worlds; or perhaps an insectoid species, engaged in a holy crusade to convert the galaxy to the worship of their many-legged god.

As chosen ruler of your people, you must decide what diplomatic and military policies will be followed in order to lead your kind to dominance among the sentient beings of the galaxy.

The galaxies of StarMaster are a complete fantasy environment of solar systems, with geographies ranging from worlds near absolute zero to worlds where rivers of molten tungsten bubble, with technologies spanning from rock-throwing cave-dwellers to advanced Elder Races with near-godlike abilities.

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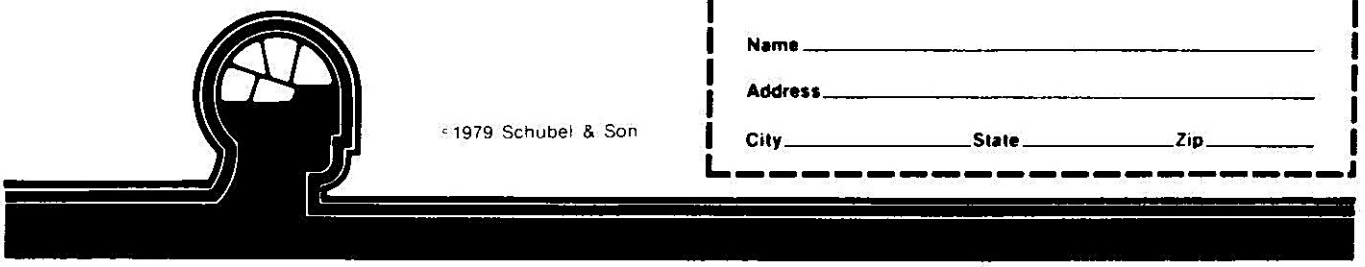

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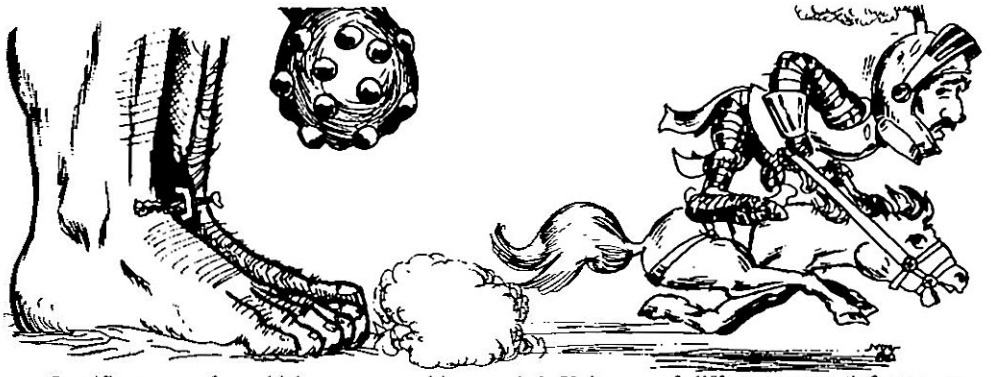
# CAPSULE REVIEWS

*THE SPACE GAMER reviews board games, role-playing games, computer games, video games, and game supplements. We review play-by-mail games if a reviewer is enrolled. We will review any science fiction or fantasy game if the publisher supplies a copy. We do not guarantee reviews of historical wargames. TSG may publish a review of a game we are not sent – IF a reader submits a review.*

*The staff will make reasonable efforts to check reviews for factual accuracy, but opinions expressed by reviewers are not necessarily those of the magazine. For information on writing reviews for TSG, see "Writing Reviews for THE SPACE GAMER" further on in this section.*

Games for which reviews have been assigned or received include: *The C&S Sourcebook, Cerberus, Cities, City if Terror, Cosmic Encounter, Dark Nebula, Death Test II, Dungeon Masters Adventure Log, Hexagony, Junta, The Legend of Robin Hood, Magic Wood, The Mines of Keridav, Monsters! Monsters!, Nebula 19, Nuclear War, Professional Wrestling, Ramspeed, Robots!, Sector 57, Space Quest, Star Quest, Strike Team Alpha, Swords & Sorcerers, Treasury of Archaic Names, Ultimatum,* and *The World of Greyhawk.*



Specific games for which we are seeking reviewers include: *City State of the World Emperor, Darkover, The Emerald Tablet, It, Knights and Knaves, MAATAC, Marine: 2002, Skull & Crossbones, Space Marines, Starfire, Starfleet Battles* (boxed ed.), and *The War of the Worlds.*

* * *

BARBARIAN KINGS (SPI); $5.95. Designed by Greg Costikyan. Includes 8-page 8½" x 11" rulebook, 11" x 17" map, 100 die-cut counters. For 2-5 players, 3-4 hours playing time. Published 1980.

Like *White Bear and Red Moon, Swords & Sorcery,* and several others, BARBARIAN KINGS is a boardgame about warring states in a mythical land where magic works. Each player starts with a king, who has selected magical and non-magical powers, and one or more provinces. He then attempts to conquer neutral provinces and provinces of the other players. The emphasis is more strategic and economic than in other games of its type. The map is divided into areas (not hexes), each with a taxation value and an inhabiting race. All units, heroes and wizards are mercenaries.

The units are colorful, interesting, and varied. Units are of different types (infantry, cavalry, or fleets) and of different races (barbarian, pirate, feudal, civilized, elven, dwarvish, orc, warfrog, whale, or airmen). Purchase cost, maintenance cost, combat strength, and movement allowance all vary, and some units have special abilities. Barbarians are a bit less powerful than civilized humans, but are much cheaper. A king will probably need several types of units in his forces, so conquests must be planned with the inhabiting races of provinces in mind as well as the taxation values.

BARBARIAN KINGS has many problems. The "humor" of SPI's *Swords & Sorcery* is again present in BARBARIAN KINGS' warfrogs, "sequin" monetary units, and "scale of zots" for measuring distance. Also, like *Swords & Sorcery,* it fails to create a believable fantasy background. The idea of all units being totally mercenary (for example, elves joining a force of orcs and dwarves to fight other elves) is hard to accept. BARBARIAN KINGS has concise rules, but the rules have several ambiguities. Movement is very fluid and attack is very easy, so attack and defense is based on guessing rather than strategy. Victory is largely a matter of luck. Worst of all, playability is poor, due to the excessive bookkeeping required.

A die-hard fan of fantasy boardgames, particularly *Swords & Sorcery,* might like BARBARIAN KINGS. Others should avoid it.

*–Keith Gross*

# ABBREVIATIONS

AC = armor class
AD&D = *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*
AH = The Avalon Hill Company
APA = amateur press association (sometimes action point allowance)
BEM = bug-eyed monster
CHA (or CHR) = charisma
CON = constitution
CPM = control process monitor
c.p. = copper piece(s)
CR = credit(s)
C&S = *Chivalry & Sorcery*
CRT = combat results table (sometimes cathode ray tube, i.e., TV screen)
d = die (3d6 means three 6-sided dice)
D&D = *Dungeons & Dragons*
DM = dungeon master (sometimes die modifier)
DX (or DEX) = dexterity
EHP = evil high priest
e.p. = experience point(s) (sometimes electrum pieces)
FBI = Flying Buffalo, Inc.
FGU = Fantasy Games Unlimited
FRP(G) = fantasy role-playing (game)
GAMA = Games Manufacturers Association
GDW = Game Designers' Workshop
GM = game master
g.p. = gold piece(s)
h.p. = hit points
HTK = hits to kill
IQ (or INT) = intelligence
K = kilo-bytes of memory
LGM = little green men
LK = luck
MA = movement allowance (sometimes magical/military/mechanical aptitude/ability)
MR = monster rating
MU = magic user
NPC = non-player character
OSG = Operational Studies Group
OSI = Ohio Scientific
PBM = play by mail
PET = Personal Electronic Transactor (by Commodore)
POW = power
RAM = random-access memory
ROM = read-only memory
S&T = *Strategy & Tactics*
SF&F = science fiction and fantasy
SIZ = size
s.p. = silver piece(s)
SPI = Simulations Publications, Inc.
SR = saving roll (sometimes strike rank)
ST (or STR) = strength
T&T = *Tunnels & Trolls*
TFG = Task Force Games
TFT = *The Fantasy Trip*
TRS = Tandy-Radio Shack
TSR = TSR Hobbies, Inc. (formerly Tactical Studies Rules)
WIS = wisdom
ZOC = zone of control

EARTH GAME (Family Pastimes); $9.50. Designed by Jim Deacove. Five page 8½" x 11" rule booklet, 17" x 22" map, 18 Earth cards and one reference chart, 47 resource tokens, 44 problem tokens, six nation cards, and 75 "one billion Earth Bucks"; boxed. 1-6 players; playing time 1-3 hours.

EARTH GAME is a cooperative game about managing the resources and solving the problems of planet Earth. Each player controls one or more of the six nations (continents), all working together to overcome their problems by the application of the proper resources. Play lasts for one year (twelve monthly turns plus two semi-annual income collection interphases) at the end of which victory is assessed; if no unsolved problems are on map all the players win, otherwise everyone loses. It is also possible to lose before the end of the game by either having a global economic collapse (one nation runs out of Earth Bucks) or by starting World War III.

On the whole, the system is a simple one ("for ages none and up") and the average wargamer will have little trouble mastering the rules. There a few fuzzy areas in the rules, but since this is a cooperative game, any mutually agreeable interpretation will suffice. Although the rules themselves are not very difficult, players will quickly find that they must all work together if they are to pilot Spaceship Earth to a victory. There can be no fighting

amongst the players; as a matter of fact, conflict is one of the problems that the nations are trying to solve.

Simple yet enjoyable, this game could provide a welcome change of pace for those gamers tired of being ganged up on in multi-player games. However, gamers looking for a game filled with fighting, double-dealing, and all the other amenities of the average multi-player game will have to look elsewhere.

*–Eric Paperman*

ELRIC (Chaosium); $12.50. Designed by Greg Stafford. 16-page 8½" x 6" booklet, 34" x 20" map, 130 die-cut counters, 48 magic cards, 8 combat sheets, zip-lock storage bag. 2-4 players; playing time 1-3 hours. Published 1977.

ELRIC is based on Michael Moorcock's fantasy-adventure series about the albino emperor. In the first scenario the players each control one of the Young Kingdoms as they try to destroy the port of Imyrr on Melnibone. In a second, two-player scenario, the players assume the parts of Elric and his arch-enemy, Theleb Kaarna, as they try to destroy each other. The counters consist of leaders, armies, and fleets. Movement is by area. There are no terrain restrictions. Each leader may move four areas per turn. Armies are "picked up" by a friendly leader. The armies are placed on a leader's space on a combat sheet, off the board. Combat is resolved easily with a simple chart, each leader having a certain combat value (armies count as one). The leaders with magic capability can ally ("muster") non-player kingdoms to their side by using magic cards. Elric himself goes flying randomly over the mapboard until stacked with a leader of one side or the other.

The map is a work of art; each kingdom is differently colored, with the names of various areas in beautiful calligraphy. By far the best feature of the game is the unique "magic card" system. On each card appears a god, monster, or artifact. Some cards have special abilities; most can be used to add combat totals; and all can be used to muster certain leaders or kingdoms. A short history of the subject of each magic card is set out in the back of the booklet. The cards add spice and personality to an otherwise purely tactical game.

Unfortunately, there are many drawbacks. My set came missing several leaders and fleets. The art on the counters and on many of the magic cards is awful. But the worst problem is the rule book, which is nearly indecipherable. In the second, two-player-only scenario, Elric must continue to make random appearances, even though he is being played; thus it is almost impossible for the Elric player to stand anywhere long enough to muster a kingdom. Also, Elric himself cannot be killed unless the "Cosmic Balance" above the mapboard is tilted all the way toward either Law or Chaos. Since this event is extremely rare, the second scenario is lengthy, boring, and unsatisfactory for both players.

Despite these disadvantages, the first scenario is smooth-playing, pleasantly unpredictable, and entertaining. As it simulates very accurately the chaos and adventure of Elric's world, the game will appeal to Moorcock fans. For $12.50 ELRIC is well worth it for fantasy and wargamers alike.

*–Patrick Amory*

FINAL FRONTIER (Ral Partha); $15.95. Designed by Glenn Kidd & Marc Rubin. Boxed with 6-page 8½" x 11" rulebook, 94 die-cut counters, 40 15mm metal figurines, and 2 dice. Two players; playing time 1-2 hours. Published 1980.

FINAL FRONTIER is a miniatures game of Terran infantry against the Krudz. The game is played on a clear, flat area, 4 ft by 4 ft. Terrain is provided by 16 counters which interfere with movement as well as block line of sight.

The miniatures are nicely detailed and easy to tell apart. The order of play is interesting and helps add balance to the play of the game. It is suggested that you mount the pieces.

The rules need to be expanded somewhat. Wounds do not kill cumulatively, but only by a hit which kills in one blow. The terrain counters were rather dull, and the markers for distinguishing wounds and stuns were hard to tell apart. Reading the final scenarios is helpful to playing the basic scenarios.

I would recommend this game to those players who are in need of science fiction infantry miniatures, and enjoy creating their own rules.

*–Billy Moore*

GAMMA WORLD (TSR); $12.99. Designed by James M. Ward & Gary Jaquet. 56-page 8½" x 11" rulebook, 16" x 24½" map, one each 4, 8, 10, 12-sided dice. Referee and one or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1978.

*Dungeons & Dragons* meets *Metamorphosis: Alpha*? GAMMA WORLD is cloned from these fantasy role-playing games. Players are Humans or Mutants in a post-holocaust 25th century, suffering slings and arrows of outrageous fortune while seeking to take up arms against their troubles. Arms range from swords to neutron bombs. Troubles include pre-holocaust robots, mutant beasties, and people with slings and arrows.

The background world is well established, powers and limits of characters are playable, combat is simple with some unique touches: the prime factor is weapon choice, characters have a large number of "hit points" and fatigue is figured in. There's a clever flow-chart for figuring out discovered artifacts, cute illustrations throughout the rulebook, and the usual charts and tables.

Some aspects make the game difficult to referee and may cause dissatisfaction. There must be more pre-planning than in other games, to make the world seem real; dungeon halls with monsters behind each door aren't enough. Pre-holocaust weapons are integral, supposedly rare finds, but if the stuff is in the rules, players acquire it. It destroys the excitement of melee if a laser gun or photon grenade ends it in one blast. Experience brings only minor benefits; surviving most hazards depends on having high basic characteristics. My pet peeves are sketchy movement and encumberance rules, and made-up names for mutant animals so you're always looking up their descriptions.

If you liked its progenitors, GAMMA WORLD is an interesting variant. Beginning players should find it easy to learn, and referees are challenged to create a playable, balanced world. It's somewhat expensive, and the sudden-death power of futuristic weaponry and the lack of character "levels" may put you off, but if the basic premise is appealing you'll probably enjoy GAMMA WORLD.

*–Ronald Pehr*

NORAD (Mishler Company); $6.00. Designed by Dana Lombardy, revised by Harry M. Mishler. 8-page 8½" x 11" rulebook; 60 die-cut counters; 20" x 24" map; ziplock bag. Two players; playing time 30 minutes to one hour. Published 1977; original publication 1973.

This is a game about a Russian nuclear attack on the United States. The map represents North America; counters depict Russian bombers, missiles, and decoys, and American fighters, anti-missiles, and decoys. The Russian player attempts to destroy as many American cities as possible, with some cities being worth more than others; the American tries to frustrate him.

This can be a gripping little game, especially on the first few plays. The map and counters are very nicely done, and the rules are short and very clear. As the fleets of Russian bombers come down from the Pole, both players can get a "this-is-real" feeling – enhanced by American irritation when he attacks a decoy, or glee when he knocks down a real bomber unit.

Unfortunately, NORAD is really too simple to bear repeated playing. It has no combat results table; any attack is an automatic success which destroys both the target and the attacker. This means that the only "tactics" anywhere in the game lie in the Russian's placement of his decoys, and the American's attempt to outguess him. Even with all the optional rules added, the game is *simple*, and victory goes to the luckiest guesser. The designer's notes which end the rulebook call NORAD "a platform on which to build . . . variants, options, and higher levels of complexity." It would take a lot of building to elevate this to a true wargame.

Recommended (mostly for components) if you like the subject and want to develop your own variants. Otherwise, nothing more than an introductory game for the young or inexperienced.

*–Steve Jackson*

## SUPPLEMENTS

CITY OF LEI TABOR (Judges Guild); $7.98. Designed by Paul Nevins and Bill Faust. Supplement to *RuneQuest*. One 92-page, 8½" x 11" booklet. Two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1980.

"Inhabitants, shops, cults, temples, inns, politics, thieves, treasures, adventures." Someone evidentally wanted a *City State of the Invincible Overlord* for *RuneQuest*. There are personalities, rumors, and improbable situations, seasoned with a dash of Chinese flavor. There are four maps, none of which appear to relate to the usual map of Glorantha.

The city is an interesting place to visit. There are many places of minor cleverness. One may encounter Omar the Sheriff, or read a reward notice for the bandit Via Duck – "100 Lunars dead; 10 Lunars alive."

Unfortunately, the *City State* idea does not work very well for *RuneQuest*. It can take half a page to describe a *RuneQuest* character. Judges Guild has used 92 pages for a rather small city. Also, it is evidently a rushed production job. There are loads of typos, and the art repeats itself. Admirers of Judges Guild will notice repeat art from previous supplements.

Unless you are rich or hard up for a *RuneQuest* city, this supplement is not worth $7.98.

*–Forrest Johnson*

THE GATEWAY BESTIARY (Chaosium); $6.95. Compiled by Sandy Petersen. Supplement to *RuneQuest*. 64-page 8½" x 11" booklet. Two or more players; playing time variable. Published 1980.

Another monster book. Sections cover giant insects, legendary beings, Celtic monsters, H.P. Lovecraft, dinosaurs, miscellaneous monsters, and "natural" animals.

If you like collections of animals and monsters, this is a good one. It doesn't include as many beasts as (for instance) an *All the World's Monsters* volume, but it is written in a more entertaining and detailed style – complete with play hints and "personality" discussions which are often lacking in this kind of supplement. Several truly obscure monsters (the Chonchon is an old favorite of mine) have been researched and described.

Faults are few. The most irritating thing I encountered was the poor grammar and proofreading. Many pages are decorated by huge blank spaces; a shame they couldn't have been filled with art, but if no good art is available, white space is better than bad illustrations. (What drawings have been included are quite all right.)

On the whole, a worthwhile book for *RuneQuest* players, simply because the complex RQ combat system makes "monster books" for other games almost useless. If you don't play RQ, you might glance at this one anyway; it covers a few mythological creatures I've never seen "gamed" before . . . and it's much easier to translate *from* the RQ system than *to* it.

*–Steve Jackson*

GRAILQUEST (Metagaming); $3.95. Designed by Guy W. McLimore, Jr. Solo adventure for *The Fantasy Trip*. Boxed, with 32-page 4" x 7" booklet, 94 strip-cut counters, one six-sided die. One to five players; playing time two to six hours. Published 1980.

GRAILQUEST is a programmed adventure, suitable for solitaire or refereed play. As one of the Knights of the Round Table, you will venture out among the villages and inns of the untamed and enchanted lands surrounding Camelot, seeking rumors of the Holy Grail and pursuing justice for Arthur's loyal subjects. Only a true, chivalrous and pious knight such as yourself is worthy of this noble task.

GRAILQUEST is well-written, well-integrated, absorbing, and fun. Chivalry and honor are as essential as sword and shield. Players get to fight wandering knights and evil wizards, hunt down marauding bandits, slay fire-breathing dragons, rescue damsels in distress, and do all those other things that made the Dark Ages so worthwhile.

Unfortunately, there are some mistakes in the numbered directions in the booklet. The first is an encounter at an inn which states "go to 77." There is no 77. Frustrating and disappointing, but easy enough to figure out. The second mistake is an instruction to "go to 14" if a player wounds the Evil Lord Krast without killing him. It should read "go to 114." Unless you're playing with a referee who is familiar with the booklet, this is extremely confusing and frustrating.

Other than that, this is a great little Micro-Quest. I never knew being good could be so much fun. If you would rather defend justice and honor under the clear blue skies of Britain than go mucking about underground robbing tombs, you'll love GRAILQUEST.

*–Steve Winter*

HELLPITS OF NIGHTFANG (Judges Guild); $3.00. Designed by Paul Jaquays. Supplement to *RuneQuest*. One 32-page booklet. Two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1979.

An aged vampire has made his home near the tomb of a legendary hero. There are enough vermin around this not-so-happy home to take out a party of novices without assistance from the residents. An altogether disagreeable neighborhood, unless you happen to like gold.

You do like gold? A coincidence; so does the vampire. There will be plenty of gold for those who successfully beard the vampire and his minions. And you probably will not have to split it so many ways, either . . . .

It is not easy to find fault with this supplement (though, Waha knows, I try). A good little adventure, easily worth $3.00.

*–Forrest Johnson*

THE TEMPLE TO ATHENA (Dimension Six); $4.50. Designed by Ken Ritchart. One 8½" x 11" 36-page booklet. Two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1980.

This temple is plunk in the middle of a big swamp. It is full of monks, lizard men and a plethora of other critters. Supposedly, the adventure is adaptable to any FRP system.

I found nothing of interest. The cover is nice, but the interior art ranges from bad to

abysmal. Typos abound. Much is left unexplained, and few players will figure out the subtleties which are explained.

All in all, a waste of $4.50. Not recommended.

*–Lorin Rivers*

## PLAY AIDS

THE COMPLEAT FANTASIST (Dimension Six); $5.50. Designed by Mark Wagner. 40-page 8½" x 11" booklet, playing aid for fantasy role-playing games. Published 1980.

THE COMPLEAT FANTASIST is subtitled "How to Convert the Major Role-Playing Systems to Each Other." Systems discussed are: *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons, Runequest, Tunnels & Trolls,* and *Arduin Grimoire.* (Arguably, this last is itself a playing aid for *Dungeons & Dragons,* but many people do consider it comprehensive enough to be a complete game.) The object is to allow a character from one game to be played in an adventure using another's rules, then to return to the original, without having been unduly benefited or prejudiced simply by rule differences. Characters are converted by arithmetic adjustment of the basic dice-rolled characteristics, with special mention of the way these characteristics function in the different games.

Conversion charts give swift, easy means to adjust strength, dexterity, and intelligence. There are well-thought formulae for relative equivalence of experience points, money, hit points. There are clear warnings as to when you shouldn't change the parameters of a character, but rather carry certain ones over to the new game.

THE COMPLEAT FANTASIST doesn't do enough. Two or three full pages would give 95% of what it has to offer. There is too little information on too many pages, much of it repeated 4 or 5 times. There's a lot of blank space on many pages, ads and illustrations use up several pages, and much too often the reader is just told to use common sense.

The charts, and a few of the words of wisdom, would have made a useful pamphlet, costing maybe $1, or a magazine article. If all that was promised for future volumes – magic, weapons, character classes – had been included, it might have been worth its price. As is, COMPLEAT FANTASIST gives far too little for that price.

*–Ronald Mark Pehr*

## COMPUTER GAMES

INVASION ORION (Automated Simulations); $14.95. Designed by J.W. Connelly and Jon Freeman. Cassette for the Apple II (32K), TRS-80 (16K), or PET (16K). One player; playing time 1-2 hours, some longer. Published 1979.

INVASION ORION is based on an earlier Automated Simulations game called *Starfleet Orion.* Like *Starfleet Orion,* INVASION ORION simulates fleet-sized battles in space between ships of widely varying strengths. Each side plays with a certain number of ships, each constructed on a point system. Ships are represented as small points of light with an ID number or letter beside each ship. The display shows a two-dimensional view, looking from above. For purposes of three-dimensional play, two or more ships may occupy the same point in space. Ten scenarios are included in the rule book, and advice is given so players can develop their own scenarios, using the builder program.

Excuse me, in INVASION ORION, that's not players, but *player.* Where as *Starfleet Orion* required two players, and the computer just handled bookkeeping chores, in INVASION ORION your computer becomes the other player, attacking your fleet with the time-honored method of killing what moves. You have to try to fool the computer into thinking you're moving one way, when you're really moving a different way. The *Orion* system combines strong points from several game systems. Ships can only be identified by ID number, not type, resulting in limited intelligence for both sides. The computer determines movement by mass, and computes the mass of each ship for you. Missiles are fired to a single X,Y point, where they explode; torpedoes can be fired at any angle and travel until they hit something or run out of range. Missiles can be used to block torpedoes, resulting in interesting anti-torpedo tactics. Optional tractor pressor beams allow each ship to use some of its drive to move other ships, both friend and foe.

When entering orders, if you make a mistake you can't correct it – causing much gnashing of teeth. Also, the computer is limited in its overall strategic play. It can handle each ship individually, but cannot coordinate many ships in an overall plan, nor can it detect such a plan if you are using one. Also, the computer cannot use the tractor pressor beams.

INVASION ORION is great for the solo games. If you have live opponents available, then leave this one on the shelf and buy *Starfleet Orion* instead.

*–Todd Zervas*

THE MEAN CHECKERS MACHINE (The Software Exchange); cassette, $19.95; disk, $24.95. Program by Lance Micklaus for the TRS-80 Level II Model I, 16K. Four levels of difficulty. One player; playing time minutes or hours. Can be saved.

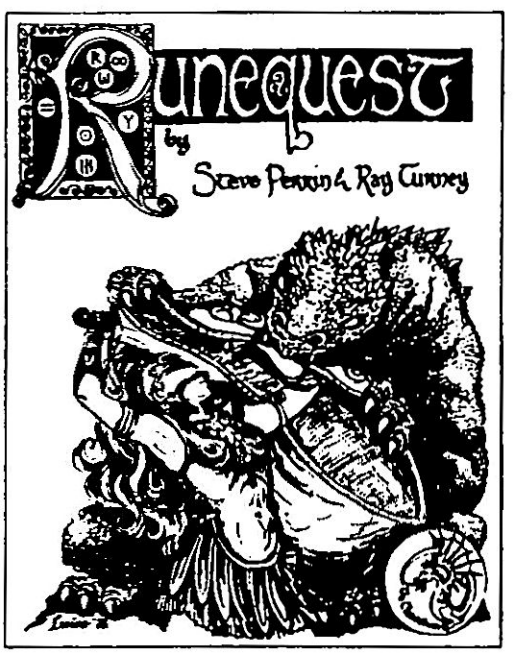

# fantasy realism!

Ridiculous? No. *RuneQuest* is for thinking role-players interested in reliving the experiences in heroic literature and legend. The brave of the past had real lives and real problems; the *RuneQuest* system lets you know them in their reality. *RuneQuest* presents the most technically-accurate role-playing mechanics yet devised, legitimately simulating the great dramas of fantasy—they are not merely collected encounter and resolution systems.

*RuneQuest's* combat system was created by a charter member of the Society for Creative Anachronism, the organization devoted to playfully and truthfully exploring the realities of the past. No other FRP melee system was designed by someone with over 12 years of first-hand fighting with edged weapons and armor.

*Runequest's* magic system was patiently assembled by scholars and practicioners of real magic and the Old Religion. The guidelines for this system work alike for any magic users, whether they belong to an established religion (such as clerics) or are out for themselves (crafty wizards).

*RuneQuest,* time-tested and proven, is a game for role-players interested in discovering all the faces of fantasy, not just one inherited from medieval Europe. Try it and see!

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Checkers played *very* well by a computer. Although I can claim no special ability at checkers, I'd like to beat it once at level 3, much less at level 4. Darn thing doesn't seem to make any mistakes, and traps me regularly.

Strong points are OK graphics, sensible movement system, and ease of learning. The computer plays a lovely game.

Weak points – none. (How's that again? Correct – none.)

A super program. If you enjoy checkers, I heartily recommend this work.

*–J. Mishcon*

PLANET MINERS (Microcomputer Games/ AH); $15.00. Program for the TRS-80 Level II, 16K. (Sold in one package with programs for the Apple II and PET.) Four pages of rules, cassette, boxed. One to four players; playing time 1-4 hours. Published 1980.

PLANET MINERS depicts a struggle for control of mining concessions on the nine planets of our solar system between four rival corporations. The game is set at a time in which space travel is readily available but not very advanced. The time that it takes to go from planet to planet becomes a real problem for the players. All four corporations always play, with any families not played by a person controlled by the program. Each player is given five ships; all start on Earth. Players gain mining concessions if they have one or more ships on a planet and the government of Earth decides to grant it to them. Players may also gain concessions by protesting claims and by claim-jumping. Each ship is assigned a "finesse" rating which represents its ability to favorably influence the government on Earth and its ability to successfully claim-jump. The player with the most concessions after 40 turns is the winner.

The players are given two real problems to solve. One is whether to allocate the best ships to government influence or to grabbing claims. The other is whether to try to grab as many claims as possible on the small inner planets or to be more patient and go for the geologically richer but much more distant outer planets (Jupiter and beyond).

The game has several major flaws. The graphics are mediocre and, what is worse, they are very slow to appear. Since most of the displays need to be seen several times each turn, you spend a great deal of time just waiting. As an economic situation it is far below the level of such games as *Santa Paravia and Fiumaccio* or *Galactic Trader.*

Overall I found it tedious. I would not recommend it.

*–Joseph T. Suchar*

SARGON II (The Software Exchange); cassette, $29.95. Program by the Haydn Book Co. for the TRS-80 and Apple II. Seven levels of difficulty. One player; playing time varies from minutes to days. Game cannot be saved (but board can be set up in any position).

This is chess played fairly well by the computer. Level 0 is an idiot but responds instantly. Level 5 averages 40 minutes per move and beats me regularly. Level 3 takes about 2 minutes most moves and I can beat him/her/it with fair regularity. (As a reference, I play medium chess, know a few openings, and play regularly with a guy rated 1200+ by the United States Chess Federation.)

Strong points are legion for this work. A randomizer insures that the computer will not always respond identically to the same situation. The program shows you what move it is currently considering, will give you suggestions for your move if you wish, generally plays faultless, though certainly not master chess.

I refuse to even mention this game's trivial weak points.

This effort stands strongly in the small group of programs that set industry standards. It is a competent computer opponent in the incredibly complex world of chess. Highly recommended for everyone short of the chess master.

*–J. Mishcon*

TAIPAN (The Software Exchange); cassette, $9.95. Program by Art Canfil for the TRS-80 Level II Model I, 16K. One player; playing time 15-30 minutes. Cannot be saved.

At the helm of your lone vessel you sail between China, Japan, and other Asian ports. You are deeply in debt to the money-lender. Will you pay off the pirate king? Might famine sweep south China and greatly raise general cargo prices, or perhaps a Yankee trader will dump opium on a far market. As the pirate junks fill the horizon, will you fight or run? Constantly trading, you deal in arms, silk, opium, or whatever will turn a profit as you try to bring $1,000,000 back to Hong Kong and win.

The game has wonderful graphics (but no sound). The pirate's guns flicker as they fire and the deck quivers with each hit. The game is constructed so that you are drawn into the history of the game, as when the money-lender gently suggests you pay up or else. A player is constantly making tough decisions to win the game, and the choices all have their own price. A point score is given at the end of each game to allow comparisons between games.

The game's major flaws are the ability to buy cargo in fractional amounts (which defeats many of the tough decisions called for), and the repetitive nature of the game's special port features. So as not to spoil the fun I won't detail them here, but it's safe to say most players will optimize their moves after the first 50 or so games. Ah, but those 50 games!

This game is so much fun that I must recommend it (but I suggest that players only allow purchases in integer amounts). It will be a constant delight for older children.

*–J. Mishcon*

## BOOKS

THE COMPLETE BOOK OF WARGAMES (Simon & Schuster); $8.95. By the editors of Consumers Guide, with Jon Freeman, among others. Paperback, 286 pages, with glossary, index, and publishers' directory. Published 1980.

How the folks at Consumers Guide got interested in wargames is something of a puzzle. But here we have the best introductory guide to wargaming yet published. Freeman has done an admirable job in describing that amorphous thing we call "the industry" in a coherent and nearly comprehensive fashion. Certainly THE COMPLETE BOOK OF WARGAMES will set the standard for years to come.

The organization of the book is simple and straight to the point. The first part gives a 50-page introduction to wargaming: what it is, who plays, and how to play the more basic formats. Included is *Kassala,* an introductory game (make your own counters) to illustrate some of the basic moves.

But the real payoff is Part 2, "Evaluating the Wargames." About 200 pages are devoted to detailed descriptions of more than 140 wargames – from *War in Europe* to D&D. Not two-sentence descriptions here. Each entry gives the title, date published, subject, playing time, scale, size of playing area, balance, key features, comments, and an evaluation in terms of presentation, rules, playability, realism, complexity, and overall evaluation. The key features and comments sections provide generous discussions of each entry. The final chapter on "computers in wargaming" is the best thumbnail account to date.

The selection of titles covers all the historical periods, near-future themes, science fiction, fantasy, and role playing. Everybody gets a fair shake. The commentary is honest to the point of brutality. For example, the section on *Drang Nach Osten!* concludes, "This game is like a brontosaurus: a fossilized relic best viewed from a safe distance."

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## *WRITING REVIEWS FOR THE SPACE GAMER*

### Capsule Reviews

Most of the reviews we print will be "capsule" reviews – 400 words or less. We pay $5 for each capsule review accepted. We want to run a review for EVERY new sf or fantasy game or supplement. During 1980, we'll also accept reviews of older games.

Each capsule review should be five paragraphs long, and contain:

(1) Basic information. Present these facts, in this order: Name of the game; publisher; price; designer. (If applicable: "supplement to ———," "companion to ———," or similar note.) Format: list of components, with sizes of maps and rulebooks, number of counters, etc. Number of players; playing time; publication date.

(2) General description of the game: background, the sides, course of play, special features, etc.

(3) Strong points. Discuss what is good about the game; in every game; there IS something worthwhile. Don't try to be Pollyanna – just point out the game's successes.

(4) Weak points. Every game has its problems, too. If the only faults you can find are minor ones, say so. If the game is fatally flawed, come right out and SAY SO. If you can phrase your criticisms as suggestions for improvement, do so.

(5) Summation: your overall opinion of the game. Who should and should not buy it, and why.

All reviews must be signed; the reviewer's name WILL be printed. No game may be reviewed by its designer or by an employee of the publisher. (Designer's articles are welcome, but must be billed as such!) Final note: If you can write a complete review in less than the full 400 words, by all means do so.

This review format is designed to encourage fairness and to give the reader enough information to let him decide whether he wants to buy that game. Keep that in mind when you write. This is a short review, NOT a complete analysis. For those who want to write longer reviews, each issue will have one or two –

### Featured Reviews

These will be game reviews 1,000 to 2,000 words long. They should contain *all the above information,* plus whatever else the reviewer wants to say. They may be written in any format. A featured review may cover either a new game or one that has been on the market for some time. If TSG has not already printed a capsule review, write one and submit it at the same time. We may even use both.

The book would have been slightly improved if each reviewer's initials had been put after each entry; knowing who's saying what gives the reader the opportunity to discount possible built-in biases. A second problem that occurs is not so much with the book as with "the industry." Things change so fast that there are lapses, even though THE COMPLETE BOOK was published this year. For example, Yaquinto – obviously one of the rising stars – was still Battleline (and owned by Heritage, no less) while the book was being prepared.

The mercurial aspects of wargaming will probably leave any new publication a bit obsolete the day it's published. Meantime, we have an excellent reference work available at (for a change) a reasonable price. Buy and enjoy.

*–Nick Schuessler*

### PUBLICATIONS

THE AMERICAN WARGAMER (AWA); $8/year (this price covers 12 monthly issues and includes membership in the American Wargaming Association). 8¼" x 11" printed offset. First published 1973.

This medium-sized newsletter (the copy I have is 12 pages long) is the official publication of the American Wargaming Association. It contains an eclectic mix of club news, convention schedules and reports, game reviews and comments, miniatures news, and whatnot. Almost all the material in this issue was WWII-oriented, with a little "ancient" thrown in. However, there are indications that science fiction, fantasy, and role-playing may sometimes be covered.

A typical fanzine: quick, informal . . . whatever the members felt like writing and the editor typed up. As with any fanzine, the material is uneven. Some of the reviews and comments seem very perceptive. Others read as though the writers were overwhelmed with their cuteness. The average quality is . . . well, average.

This seems to be for the serious historical wargame fan – the person who plays a lot of wargames of different periods, likes to talk about them, likes to write about them, likes to read about them, likes to argue about them. If you're a "club" wargamer you may find it worthwhile to join AWA and get AMERICAN WARGAMER. If you're purely into science fiction, fantasy, or role-playing, there may not be much here for you.

*–Steve Jackson*

# ERRATA

Because of a typographical error in issue 31, a piece of art by Kevin C. Ellis was credited to "W.C. Ellis". Our apologies.

Fantasy Productions, Inc. (also doing business as Twinn-K Inc.) has pointed out some errors in the review of *High Fantasy* in issue 30. (1) *It isn't stated how wizards acquire spells.* The primary means of acquiring spells is from scrolls. (2) *It isn't stated how wizards of less than the fifth plane acquire the book which is necessary for most spellcasting.* One may deduce from the character-generation "flow chart" that wizards begin the game with 3-6 spells. Twinn-K says, "Wizards begin the game with a book." (3) *It isn't stated if wizards may bear arms.* One may deduce from the flow chart that a wizard may use a weapon.

Due to an oversight, an important phrase was omitted from the *Space* computer game review in issue 31. As printed, the ninth line of the fourth paragraph reads, "IF IP (-LP) . . ." It should read "IF IP is greater than (-LP) . . ."

# The Fantasy Trip

is killing monsters, finding treasure, braving danger, joining quests, conjuring magic, and exploring the unknown the romance and mystery life should be. THE FANTASY TRIP frees your imagination for an evening of fun and adventure. It's the role-playing game for the 80's the one you've waited for.

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The new TSG shows promise. However, don't completely lose your heritage. A couple of gaming strategy articles or variants, too, please. Preferably half the issue. This last issue, no. 30, didn't have any such articles. I notice you don't seem to be soliciting articles any more, except for reviews and contests. I think this is a big mistake. What about the likes of Glenn L. Williams, Dave Ritchie, W. G. Armintrout, and Norman Howe, who contributed regularly, not to mention other fan writers who sent in one-shot articles to keep TSG fresh. I don't know about Mickey Mouse, they struck me as rather good. (Better than these Index/Guide/Survey to This and That "articles" you are printing. No more of them, please.)

Your contests started out poorly, I thought Kung Fu contest was kinda unimaginative and not so hot, however, they have got much better. They are simple but effective. The latest, on traps, ought to provide several pages of very interesting reading. I hope you decide to print a number of traps and not just the winner.

I just have one suggestion regarding the contests. If you could make the deadlines a little bit longer, it would enable Canadians to enter.

I like the "Painting Fantasy Miniatures" by Kevin Hendryx. A well written informative series of articles. Don't go overboard on reviews please. You might have to cut down on the feature reviews and just go with capsule reviews until you get it down to a manageable amount.

Thank you for the good work.

David Brockington
Maple Ridge, BC

*On the contrary – we have been, and DEFINITELY still are, soliciting outside articles. As you say, that's what it takes to keep TSG fresh. As long as the writers keep sending good articles, we'll keep printing them (for instance, Armintrout is in this issue).*

*SJ*

In all honesty, I thought issue 30 was a little sparse. *Kung Fu 2100* was excellent, as were Painting Fantasy Miniatures and Deus Ex Machina, but they were the only real articles. I'm glad to have the index, but there isn't much reading material there. (I was stunned by how short it was – I expected two or three pages.) Game Design seems to be dragging on a bit too long, telling me things that should be obvious to anyone who's ever played a boardgame. And two feature-length FRP system reviews in one issue is too much. How about a capsule on one, just to make sure nobody buys it, and save its feature for later. I mean it's depressing to read about two bum FRP games in one issue.

I don't want to complain too loud, though, since I still have to end it with Keep Up the Good Work.

Steve Winter
Dubuque, IA

I wish to take strong exception to Jay Rudin's review of *Crypt of the Sorcerer*, in which he constantly complains about the price of the set ($15.00). This set contains well over $16.00 retail merchandise, not counting map and rules (which are "free").

I sell quite a few of these as an excellent starting set for beginning figure painters.

*Caverns of Doom* is an even better buy.

I wish to emphasize that I have no connection whatsoever with Heritage, other than offering their products for retail sale.

Dan Wagner
Kennedy's Models and Games
Los angeles, CA

# Letters

We are disappointed.

When we do a bad game and get a bad review, we take it. When we publish a game system like *Adventures in Fantasy* we do not expect a magazine like yours to publish a poorly written hatchet job by a reviewer impressed with his own critical commentary.

Not one customer, even those who had to wait several months to get *Adventures in Fantasy* when our printing was delayed last winter, has had one bad thing to say about it. When we get good comments, from people who have spent money on the product and then see a review like the one your magazine allowed to be published, we lose faith in your professional editorial integrity.

At Origins we expressed a strong interest in advertising in your magazine. Since this is our only effective protest to what we feel was an uncalled-for pan of an excellent piece of work, we will not place any advertising with you this year.

Dennis P. O'Leary
Vice President
Excalibre Games

*If a review contains some error of fact, we are not slow to correct it. But if you are upset because the reviewer didn't think your game was worth $25, there is nothing we can do.*

*The integrity of our reviews is a major asset of this magazine. If a review seems unfair, we don't print it. That's why we ask publishers to send review copies here. But if running an honest review means losing an advertiser – we will just have to live with that.* *–FJ*

I liked your Game Design article. However, despite your remarks, *Tactics II*, *Gettysburg*, and *D-Day* do not use the same CRT. The 1958 *Tactics II* table (as opposed to the '61 version) had D retreats of 3, 4, and 5; the old *Gettysburg* table lacked the exchange. Even after the *Stalingrad* CRT was standardized, there were small variations from game to game. For example, soak-offs at less than 1-6 were forbidden in *Stalingrad* and allowed in *Waterloo* and *D-Day*; on the *D-Day* slide rule CRT odds beyond 1-6 and 6-1 were fought as 1-6 and 6-1 rather than being automatic eliminations, etc. Also, while *Tactics* preceded *Gettysburg* (by about 5 years), I am reasonably sure that *Gettysburg* was out the year before *Tactics II* (though both were out in 1959). *D-Day* was also the first game to use NATO unit symbols – *Tactics II* had circular HQs, but the unit types were words printed on the counters.

Finally, in defense of the early '60's AH titles, I point out that they continue to be played, while many later games have vanished. Certainly, both AHIKS and the AWA find that *Waterloo* and *Stalingrad* are among the most commonly desired games for tournament play.

George Phillies
Ann Arbor, MI

# SOFTWARE SURVEY

A number of forms for our 1980 Game Software Survey arrived late. Among them were the forms for Simutek, which we had included in the survey, based on information from a catalog. (We try to include advertisers in our surveys, whether they send in their forms or not.)

The additional information:

BASICS AND BEYOND, INC., Pinesbridge Road, Box 10, Amawalk, NY 10501; 914-962-2355. Founded 1979. Buys outside programs; offers choice of royalty or flat fee. Sells by mail; catalog available.

BASICS AND BEYOND sells 16K cassettes for the TRS-80 Level II. *Microcosm I* is a package of 30 programs for $19.95. *Microcosm II* is a package of 20 programs for $19.95. *Microcosm III* (to be released in September) is 20 programs with sound for $24.95.

Unfortunately, the programs given in a package have little to do with each other. For example, *Microcosm I* includes both the game program *Atlantis*, and a calorie-counter program.

SIMUTEK, POB 13687, Tuscon, AZ 85732; 602-886-5880. Founded 1978. Owner: Michael Gariepty. Programmers: Michael and Andrew Gariepty. Buys outside programs; 5-10% royalties. Sells by mail; catalog available.

SMALL SYSTEM SOFTWARE, POB 366, Newbury Park, CA 91320. Founded 1978. Owners and programmers: Tom Nussmeier and Gary Thurmond. Sells by mail; catalog available.

SSS produces cassettes for the TRS-80, 4K. $10.00 each. Titles include *Air Raid*, *Barricade*, and a version of the well-known program *Life*.

THE SOFTWARE FACTORY, 23849 La Salle Canyon Dr., Newhall, CA 91321; 805-259-8558. Founded 1978. Owners and programmers: Don Worth, Frank Wood, and Bob Male. Does not buy outside programs. Sells by mail; catalog available.

The Software Factory specializes in programs for the Apple. The only game listed is the enjoyable adventure, *Beneath Apple Manor*, $15.00 in the cassette version (16K), $20.00 on disk (32K).

Also, we failed to mention that some familiar game companies – Zocchi and Schubel & Son – distribute game programs, in addition to their regular products. Both companies distribute Automated Simulations games, among others.

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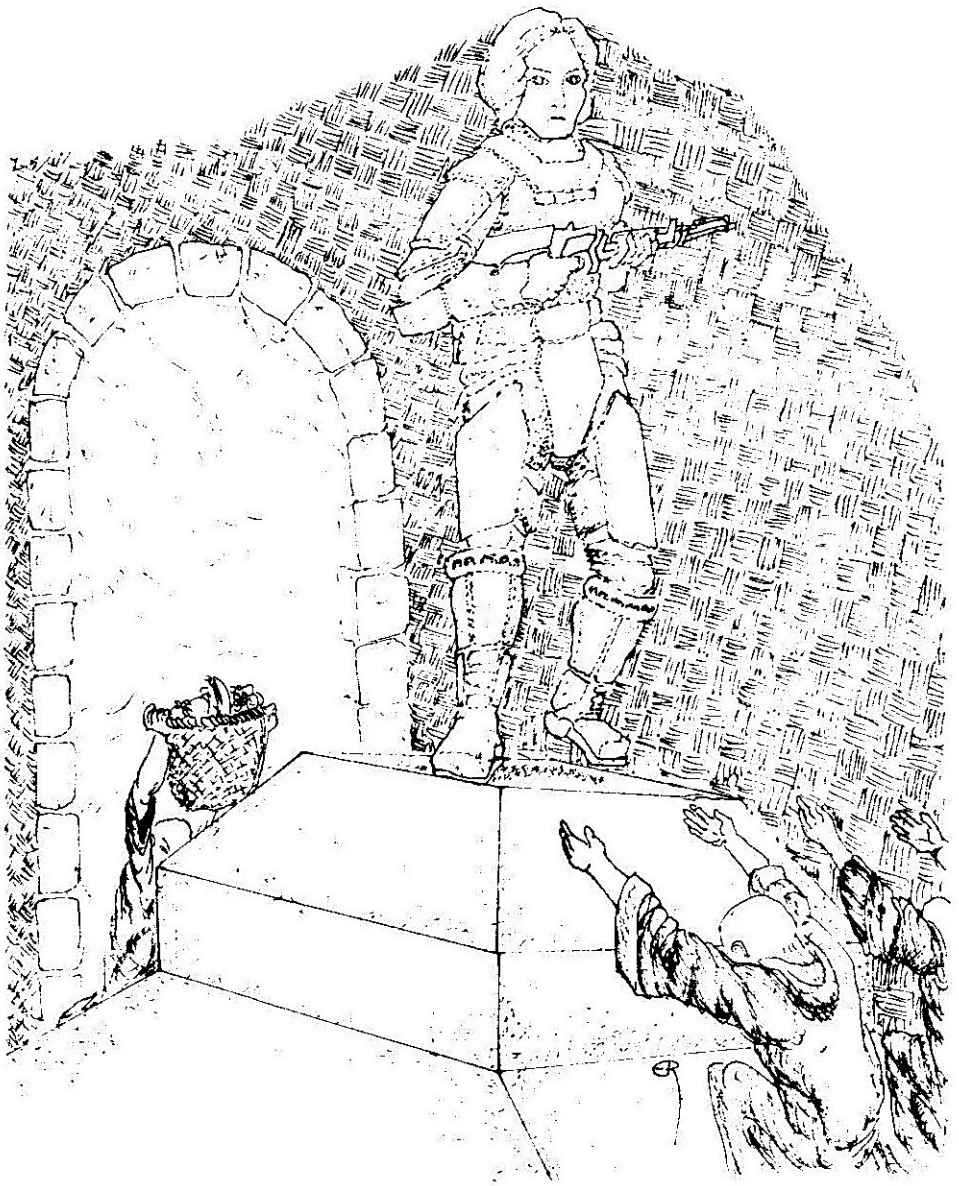


# Calendar

September 12-14: OTHERCON IV. SF gaming con, College Station, TX. Contact Sven Knudson, POB 3933, College Station, TX 77844; 713-775-0692 or 779-2588.

September 19-20: FALLCON. FRP con, Sycamore High School, Cincinnati, OH. Contact Wanna Play, 5923 Hamilton Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45224.

October 17-19: WORLDS III. Wargaming, s-f and fantasy con, Philadelphia Treadway Mohawk Inn, Philadelphia, PA. Contact Worlds III, 314 Edgely Ave., Glenside, PA 19038; (215) 887-3876 or DE3-1998.

February 14-16, 1981: DUNDRACON VI. FRP gaming con, Oakland, CA. Contact @ 386 Alcatraz Ave., Oakland, CA 94618.

CONVENTION ORGANIZERS – let us know about your con! Free publicity never hurts.

# Reader Ads

Reader ads are available to individuals (not to companies). $5 per insertion; limit 20 words or four lines.

DUNGEON TRAPS – 8 plans that will drive your players crazy. Send $1.00 plus 25 cents postage to Reilly, Box 8144, Rochester, NY 14617.

Sale and Auction: Am auctioning off *Traveller Journal* no. 1, best bid over $10. Also, lots of games and magazines for sale. Send SASE to Allen Glicksman, Apartment A-11, 250 Beverly Blvd. Upper Darby, PA 19082; (215) 259-9923.

AUSTIN AREA WARGAMERS are invited to the TSG playtest sessions. Want to play, discuss and review new games from various mfrs? Call 447-7866 for information.

# News & Plugs

Uncontrollable Dungeon Master (PO Box 113, Hinesville, GA 31313) is a new company with one game, *Death and Destruction.* Not to be confused with another popular game with the same initials, D and D can be played by 2 to 64 players. Each of the 64 pieces has a different name and different powers. Lust, for instance, moves two spaces in any direction and destroys anything it lands on. Quake moves for five spaces, destroying anything in its path. Other pieces include Granite, Deadstar, Greed, Assassin, and Self-Preservation. D and D costs $8.95, plus $1 for shipping.

SPI offers the 4-page, bi-weekly *Richard Berg's Review of Games.* Issue no. 1 includes reviews of *Fortress Europa, Streets of Stalingrad, Hero,* and *Swashbuckler,* all non-SPI games. There is also the news column, "Grapes." Subscriptions $20.00/year (25 issues).

PECULIAR NEWS – There are *two* companies working on different *Dallas* games. Yaquinto is doing one, the other is being done by . . . (*gasp*!) SPI. Naturally, both companies insist that theirs is going to be the "big" game. . . . We understand that SPI is doing the role-playing version, while Yaquinto has the boardgame.

The American Wargaming Association (see Game Survey, issue 28) is looking for members; $8.00/year. Included, *The American Wargamer,* a monthly newsletter. Also available, Jeff Pimper's *All the World's Wargames 1953-1977;* $2.00 to members, $3.00 to non-members. Also, *The AWA Guide to Running Wargame Conventions,* free to organizers. The AWA additionally runs PBM boardgame tournaments. Contact: Membership Secretary John Koontz, 2915 E. College no. 112, Boulder, CO 80303.

The Gamemaster (POB 2878, Anaheim, CA 92804) offers the PBM game *Wofan.* Set up $10.00, including the first three turns. Subsequent turns $2.00. Rules may be purchased separately for $4.00.

The National Monstergaming Society (see news, TSG 30) has set dues at $5.00 per year.

The Dave Casciano Co., also doing business as Attack International, is producing fantasy miniatures. Just released – eight 25 mm figures.

Fantasy Simulations, Inc. (2840 Robinette Dr., Orange Park, Fla. 32073) offers the PBM game *Interstellar Imperialism.* Set-up $3.00; turns 30 cents. (That's right, 30 cents.) In lieu of turn fees, players may subscribe to FSI's monthly *The Fantasy Journal.* Separate subscriptions are 65 cents per issue.

*ANNOUNCING . . .*

# STEVE JACKSON GAMES

*Yes, it had to happen. Steve Jackson – the designer of OGRE, G.E.V., and THE FANTASY TRIP – is now in business on his own. An independent publisher. Designing the kind of games you want to play – and producing them with the quality you'd expect from far more expensive packages. Full-color maps and covers . . . illustrated rules . . . multi-color counters . . . at $3 per game! Read on . . .*

## RAID on *IRAN*

*Can you free the hostages?*

A simulation game about the U.S. raid into Tehran. If the raid had gone in, Special Forces teams would have battled Iranian fanatics – with the hostages' lives in the balance. What would have happened?

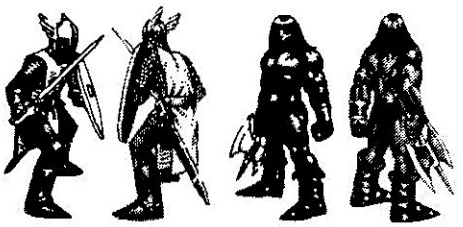
An alternate scenario explores the possibility that the Ayatollah himself might have been the target of a raid – to be traded for the American hostages.

Rules cover U.S. surprise, mob action, helicopter breakdown (of course!), undercover aid, panicked/berserk militants, and more.

For one or two players. Playing time under 90 minutes.

RAID ON IRAN includes a full-color 16" x 21" map of the embassy grounds, 112 counters in 3 colors, and an illustrated rules sheet.

*Game design by Steve Jackson.*



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## KUNG FU 2100

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KUNG FU 2100 includes 112 counters in 3 colors; 16" x 21" rules sheet; 10" x 21" color map; extra CRT and record sheets; and ziplock bag for counters.

A unique combat system represents the martial artists' attacks and defenses.

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*Designed by B. Dennis Sustare. Edited by Steve Jackson and Forrest Johnson.*

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A short game . . . but not a simple one! ONE-PAGE BULGE is challenging – fast and playable, yet a good representation of the last battle for the Ardennes.

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*Game design by Steve Jackson.*

---

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*Signature* . . . . . .

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# Martian Metals Compromises!!

Greetings again, Earthlings. We just wanted to get back in touch with you to tell you there were no hard feelings on Mars about the way your local gravity fields messed up our inertializer. Even though we WERE doing it all for your benefit — turning our ads upside down to fit your silly magazines. We were a little bit annoyed when your printing plant flipped over sideways — but you can't be blamed for that.

And to show what nice guys we are, we're trying again. We've added a compensating n-polar redundant icthyophagous interminibilator to the system. So this month the ads will be all right.

*(Will you please quit babbling and say something about the miniatures?)*

Right. This is an advertisement, Earthlings. You're supposed to read it and then go out and buy lots of our **TRAVELLER** miniature figures. There are three reasons you should buy them. FIRST: You can use them with GDW's **TRAVELLER™**, which is the most realistic game you Earthlings have. SECOND: They're the best science-fiction miniatures in the whole galaxy, and they're disgustingly inexpensive, too. THIRD: If you don't buy them, the boss Martian will cry.

*(Quit giving away state secrets. Just turn on the machine. Here — I will. OH, NO...)*

**Hey, look at those Earthlings run!**

*(I think we overcompensated. Do you think they'll like their building better turned on THIS side?)*

Who cares, as long as they keep buying?

TRAVELLER™

*Tell them you saw it in the Martian Times Herald and Zilch-Breeders' Weekly*

**Martian Metals**

*Manufacturers of DRAGONSLAYERS™*

**01956 Pass Rd, Dept. SG**
**Gulfport, MS 39501**
**601-896-8600**